

**Tone Saastad**

## **Displacements**

**An Artistic Work Process – There, and Back Again**

**Bergen National Academy of the Arts 2007,  
a research and development project**



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Curriculum Vitae

# Preface

It is an obvious idea, and many are those who have entertained it: If artistic research, conducted by the artists themselves, is supposed to differ from research on art that an art historian or sociologist of art might undertake just as well (or probably better, because he or she would be educated for the task), artistic research has to take its point of departure in the area to which the artist has privileged access: the creative processes. The artist is able to do something we non-artists cannot do; he or she can perceive the creative work from the inside, so to speak. But if the artist's scholarly rendering of these processes is to have any touch of validity, it must be more than just a reflection in retrospect, it has to be based on some kind of log of the whole process, day by day. The most genuine form of artistic research by artists is easily conceived as this kind of follow-up studies where data are the artists' daily doings (plus reflections directly tied up with these), all set down day by day by the artists themselves. And where these data afterwards are interpreted, still by the artists themselves, partly with the benefit of a kind of personal hindsight that is also the privilege of the artists.

Indeed, the idea is obvious – but not many artists have implemented it. Actually I know only one, the Norwegian textile artist Tone Saastad – and the result is the essay you have in your hand. What Tone Saastad here offers us, is therefore not only a unique insight into the process through which the works for a planned exhibition grow forth in a way that is anything but linear. She also gives us an invaluable example of the way in which this kind of research may be conducted.

Epistemologically, this type of research gives rise to some extremely intriguing problems. No matter how much we feel obligated to problematize the concept of objectivity, we do want the results of the research to rise above the purely subjective, the purely idiosyncratic. But is that possible if the researcher, like Tone Saastad, only studies herself and her own experiences?

Here, you need to keep a steady hand. The research is made up by two main phases, the writing of the log, and the analysis of the log. The last part is not more subjective than any other analysis of a written research material. The fact that Tone Saastad has a special access to the log material does not automatically make her analysis less valid than the analysis an outside researcher would be able to give. As implied earlier, you could argue that she has an advantage over other researchers examining the same material, because she has experienced the situations in the text herself (and is able to fill in details where the text is too general). From a different angle, however, this type of pre-understanding of the text can be a source of error, or a veil preventing the log writer as an analyst from seeing important patterns more easily spotted by an outsider. But that the pre-understanding could be a source of error in relation to a textual understanding, is a general condition that also applies to the outsider who simply has a different kind of pre-understanding.

The important thing is that the text is presented as available research material, for Tone Saastad herself, and in principle for anyone else. And also that Tone Saastad's own interpretation of the material would be open for discussion on this basis – just as anybody else's interpretation would be a matter for discussion. Tone Saastad's interpretation might be misleading to some degree, like any other interpretation, but her special point of departure does not in principle make it any more subjective than that of others.

However, Tone Saastad has herself created the material which has been analysed, so can we trust that she has been honest when writing the report, that she has made sure to include all relevant episodes, experiences and thoughts? Strictly speaking, she could have made it all up, not to mention that she could have hidden unpleasant incidences – consciously or not – forgotten important episodes, or missed crucial details. Thus, would not these concerns cast a particularly subjective shadow over her research work?

Not more than such considerations would problematize any other research based on material consisting of people's statements about their lives and views, as we know it from the humanities or the social sciences. Logs, letters, questionnaire answers, interview statements, statements given during focus groups discussions – everything can in principle be invented constructions, pure fabrication, all simulation. Normally, there is no reason to believe this to be the case. Still, there will always be more or less conscious omissions – which is something the analysis should always be aware of.

As this essay shows, Tone Saastad has not been so tied by her own preunderstanding as the log writer that she has been unable to be surprised by passages of her own text. And as the reader will notice, she is fully aware of how the log came to be, of what she has wanted to include at different times during the process, and also of what she has left out. Tone Saastad has the theoretically reflective consciousness of the character of a research project that is a prerequisite for any researcher. Therefore, she turns the potential scepticism one could have had towards her study of her own work, into a particular confidence in her findings. The picture she presents of an artistic creation process is extra strong and interesting, precisely because she herself is the artist. Thus, we return to the question I posed initially, about what artists can add to artistic research through their own, special insight.

Even though the type of artistic research that Tone Saastad has presented, is an obvious idea although few have tried it out, the fact remains that it is far from the only viable one. One of the easiest mistakes to make while discussing artistic research is to think that this is one thing, and one thing only. Naturally artistic research comes in many different shapes and sizes – as one can convince oneself by simply taking a look at the research projects undertaken by the staff at the Bergen National Academy of the Arts during the past 10 years. The main reason why the Academy supports such projects by special grants, is of course that we who are interested in the arts, all need the kinds of knowledge that is produced this kind of research. But a no less significant reason is that we who are interested in artistic research, need examples to discuss. Through her project and her essay Tone Saastad has given us a wonderfully insightful example of what both artistic creativity and artistic research may be like.

Søren Kjørup  
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# Introduction

Many people have a relationship to the visual arts, but very few know much about how the artworks have been made, or what lies behind what they can see. Artistic work processes are little known outside the ranks of the those involved, and the artists themselves have rarely reflected upon their own practice in writing. The object of this research and development project, which is connected with the Bergen National Academy of the Arts, is to increase the knowledge and insight of these processes.

The working title "From Idea to Work to Exhibition" describes in short the contents of my research: to follow an artistic work process from beginning to end; from the first fleeting idea to the finished works are shown at vernissages, and toasted in champagne. As foundation, I use my own work leading up to my solo exhibit at Kunstnerforbundet, a Gallery for Contemporary Art in Oslo, the fall of 2001. I document my work by keeping a log.

What recognises an artistic work process? What drives the process ahead, are there approach strategies, or methodology in the actions? How are ideas born and developed? How did the end result turn out like it did? These are the questions I will try to answer.

I got my degree from the former textile study at the Kunsthåndverkskolen in Bergen (now Bergen National Academy of the Arts) from 1976 to 1980, with textile printing as my field of specialty. However, in recent years I have not worked much with traditional textile printing techniques (like hand screen printing). My production has varied, both in regards to techniques and expression, but for the most part I have focused on the two-dimensional surface. How do you build surfaces with depth, glow, how do you make them interesting, attractive and multi-dimensional? The means have been a fusion of colour, technique, material, and an abstract world of motive, often based on simple or complicated structures, forms and repetitions. My point of departure, my foundation, is a tradition where technique and material are important factors in the expression of the textile art.

In addition, I have a strong interest in architecture, and in confronting challenges concerned with given space. Thus, in my artistic practice, I have first and foremost worked towards exhibits and commissions for public spaces.

Personally, my research is motivated by a desire to view my own practice with a clear and, at least tentatively, sober eye. By documenting experiences, actions, thoughts, and sorting, examining, and structuring them into a substantial, readable matter which can be discussed, I hope to achieve a greater insight in my own subject, and also contribute to my own progression.

Also, the challenge of working creatively in a different field than usual is tempting. Writing a text is creating "something" out of "nothing", much like the process I will examine. The writing will in itself sharpen my consciousness because it demands a high level of precision and consistency.

Seen in a larger perspective, I believe it is important that experienced knowledge from more actors are gathered and verbalised within the arts. The reason being it increases communication, and it also contributes to conveying knowledge about the field as a whole.

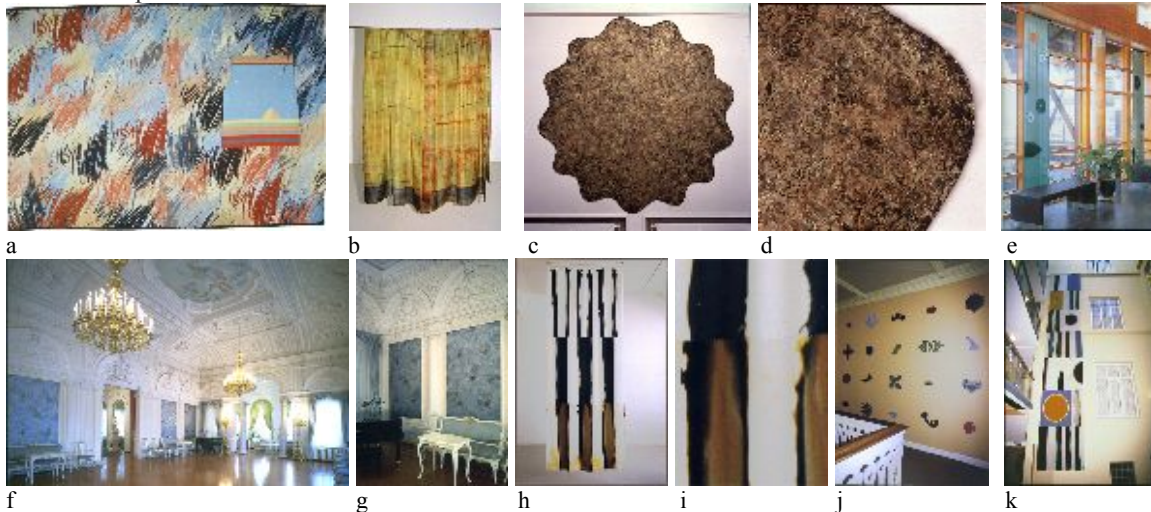
Artists working with visual expressions all have different experiences, they work in different ways and have different objectives. Still, producing artworks for exhibitions is

still a common and typical endeavour for many. It is likely that my experiences are recognisable and representative for many of those who work creatively with project deadlines.

I have chosen to narrow the focus of my research, the log being my only source. (That includes yearly schedules and visual documentation in the form of sketches, tests and photographs.) It is meant to represent one personal experience, and one particular situation, and it can be viewed as a field study of one piece in a large, complex puzzle. It is my wish that the material can be used for further art research, or research in a different field. I also hope that it will be read with interest by my colleagues, students and others who have had similar experiences, and not least that it will contribute to a greater insight and demystify the artistic "creation" process for the regular, art interested public.

The log serves as the source for a two-layered history: **"The Story!" and "The Reflection"** "The Story" is the comprised and chronological description of the work process as it were at that moment. "The Reflection" consists of reflections on phenomenon and connections in this process, which are meant to touch on the answers to the questions I have posed. The work with the log, and how it worked as a foundation for the two parts of the story, is addressed in the last chapter, **"The Log"**.

Some older pieces:<sup>1</sup>



- 
- <sup>1</sup>
- a: "Når geparden mediterer". Silk screen printing on cotton. Exhibited at "6 i tekstil", Bergen International Festival Exhibit at Bryggen museum in Bergen, 1983.
  - b: Silk length. Different resist techniques. Exhibited at the Museum of Decorative and Applied Art, Copenhagen in connection with receiving the Georg Jensen Award in 1990.
  - c and d: "Sirkel". Different painting and printing techniques on canvas. Made for "Kryss / Crossing borders", exhibition at Kunstforeningen in Bergen, 1992.
  - e: Part of commission to Trollanleggene (oil plant), the adm. building. 2 of a total of 8 painted lengths, 1994.
  - f and g: Commission to The Norwegian Embassy in Moscow. All in all, 4 panels, same technique as c and d. 1993.
  - h and i: "True blue". Painted and colour discharged silk. For the exhibit "Blå" at Vestfold Kunstnersenter in 1996.
  - j: "Arkiverte tapetester". Diff. painting and printing tech. on fiber boards. "Tendenser", Gallery F 15 in 1998.
  - k: Part of commission, Dept of Comparative Politics, Bergen University, 1998. Painted and colour discharged silk.



## **The Story**

When my exhibition finally opens on 22 September, five artworks will hang from the walls at the top floor of Kunstnerforbundet. The textiles are a series of variations over the same theme; they are abstract, geometrically constructed by overlapping circles in different systems; the use of colour is controlled, the expression is graphic and spartan, and the series have later, descriptively, been named "Displacements I–V". The title points to the theme I work with, which according to my own press release is *optical effects made by small displacements, how simple means can create different, complex unities, which entices and challenges the visual comprehension.*

I continue:

*The pieces are results of an old interest in the kitchen sphere. I have been intrigued by the everyday, prosaic utensils placed in drawers and cupboards. They are rarely really seen, but are in fact quite fascinating, both as forms, expressions, and as bearers of history and culture. The basis for "Displacements" is a photograph of my well-used pasta spoon. The photograph was computer manipulated and processed, stripped of its history and significance as a kitchen utensil, transferred to printing screens, and eventually became the module I used as a tool when I constructed the different pieces.*

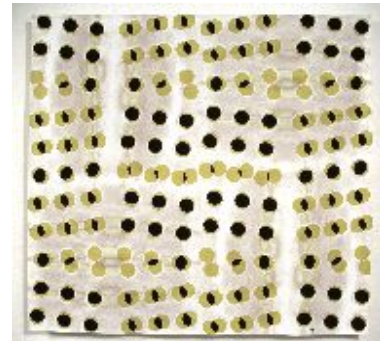
That is the short version. What happened in the meantime?



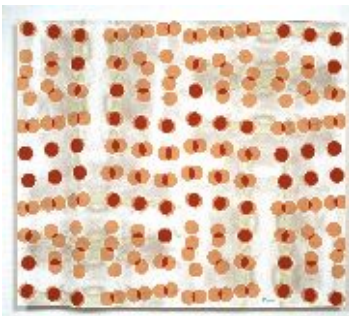
"Displacement I", 235 cm x 235 cm



"Displacement II", 220 cm x 220 cm



"Displacement III", 220 cm x 235 cm



"Displacement IV", 200 cm x 220 cm



"Displacement V", 220 cm x 370 cm

# Start

## A Detour

My exhibit opens in September 2001, but the first preparations and the introductory thought process begins two years earlier, the fall of 1999. Simultaneously, I start keeping a log. The work process is more or less interrupted when a year-long fulltime teaching period commences in January 2000. Therefore, I do not start the concentrated work on "Displacements" until early 2001.

In the middle of everything else, I have after much hesitation decided to partake in a completely different exhibition as well. I work on that over the weekends, the afternoons and during the weeks the institution has reserved for research and development work, concurrently with teaching throughout 2000. The work on this exhibit is not part of my research, however, it still plays its role.

The exhibit was titled "Metamorphosis", the theme was recycling / transformation / conversion, and it was arranged by The Western - Norway Association of Arts and Crafts. To this exhibition, I worked together with two colleagues on a group project called "Three detours". We wanted to make a twist on the rather worn out approach. We wanted to define the theme in our own way by questioning how it would work to take years of experience with one material and transfer it to a completely different one. By using each others expertise we wanted to challenge ourselves to enter into unknown territories, transform and recycle our own experience, so to speak.

I decided to attempt being a ceramist, and ended up with a collection of "kitchen objects" in porcelain and stoneware. The idea was simple, but fascinating to me: What comes out when I press clay into everyday kitchen utensils? Could the meeting between positive and negative form and the initially familiar objects result in something strange, or double? The somewhat laidback approach made it easier for me to see the project through combined with teaching and the thoughts of the solo exhibit in my mind.



A "kitchen object".

## **Prelude, the Development of a Theme**

Looking back:

It all started with an application for exhibit space. These applications usually include a project idea. When I applied in January 1999, I based the application on some imaginary textiles, which had followed me for a long time. I had pictured textiles having been exposed to rough treatment: broken down, put back together, afflicted with big, reckless colour stains – all in all given a raw and immediate expression. These images could take me in many and different directions, all interesting for me to explore. It became a point that the pieces should not be made in one, collective technique, rather they would grow as separate, independent individuals; both technically and in their expression. And, as the application states: *It has to be a mounting job to make the exhibition work as a unity*. The positive response came in March.

From the first ideas...

The first fall lies ahead of me. It is still 1999, the exhibit opens in two years from now, and I have two exhibitions to think about. How am I going to approach this, and where do I start?

Should I use the old images from the application? They are still interesting, but I need to know more about what and how. I spend a day at the library; nose down in magazines from different fields, and it makes me think of golf balls. Something to roll in clay to make prints. After that, my thoughts keep spinning around balls, especially in the form of celestial orbs: planets, the moon with its craters and the sound of space, the feeling of infinity.

Among the initial abundance of ideas, I also consider an idea of purely ornamental textiles with geometrical patterns. So far, nothing has been rejected.

On the way, I include computer manipulated photos into my plans. Even here, my thoughts run in circular motions: hair whirls, navles, something with absorption, bacswEEP. Still, the idea of something "raw and direct" follows me, now combined with the photographs.

In October, it is suddenly dawned on me what I should do for "Metamorphosis". Not imprint the clay, rather let the clay be passively marked by its surroundings, in this case little, prosaic kitchen utensils.

Around the kitchen utensils exists an entire world of visual and story-telling expressions: The kitchen with its drawers and cupboards filled with strange, practical, and well-used objects, and food with patterns and movements. I want to use these visual expressions for lived life as a starting point for my work with the textiles as well. With that, "Kitchen Research" is born, the working title for both my exhibit projects.

... to the construction of a world of imagery.

Now, it is time to act. There are photographs to be taken! Kitchen utensils are selected, food with interesting appearance is bought, the manual of my camera is read carefully, old photographic skills are brought back, equipment is borrowed, and something resembling a photo studio is made. I shoot, film after film, black and white and colour, in daylight and studio light. Light effects are important. I have mostly chosen little, anonymous, shiny steel objects, which reflect the light. I think that if I use the light correctly, the colour nuances and shadow effects in the reflection will be interesting to work with as I go on.

In the kitchen I also find the silver cup I was given for my christening. There is a girl's head on the cup, and I photograph it, thinking it could be the signature, or "label" for the entire project, "Tone's home made...".

At the same time as I am doing this concrete work, my mind buzzes. Where am I going with all these photographs? More or less humorous ideas are considered and filed. The word *humour* is often mentioned as an important approach. Still, I notice that my idea of combining photographs and roughly treated textiles is fading. The photo material, and how to use it, is gradually becoming more important. The weight shift is also due to a wish of learning more about digital photo processing, which becomes an important motivation factor as the project continues.

Thus, towards the end of the fall, I make my first, fumbling attempts to teach myself to use Photoshop, without great success. The same can be said of my efforts to raise money to the project through applications for scholarships and project support.

After the first six months I am left with a lot of photo material and a somewhat blurry idea of what I want to do with it. I know that I would like to explore the potential in the photographs by editing them in Photoshop, but I do not know the programme very well.

Luckily, I do not have to continue my self-study in the perplexities of computer technology. The Academy offers a two-week workshop in image processing and Photoshop in the Spring of 2000, and I eagerly throw myself into it, with great benefit. The tests with my photographs presents me with new ideas, and lead me into the world of repeats and patterns. I take pictures of more kitchen utensils, and leave the notion of food images behind. However, the image of the girl's head on the baptism cup becomes more interesting. What stories can this girl tell?

Examples:



Pattern of the steamer basket



Pasta spoon pattern



Reverse pasta spoon pattern



Girl's head with fish ladle



Steamer basket with girl's head



– and vice versa

Even though I am now focused on teaching and other school related work, I occasionally get new ideas from things I see, and situations I am in, which I register and file.

In one period, I picture the photographs used directly; large details blown up, like photographs with or on the textiles. Therefore, I sign up for an supplementary training class in "Monumental Photographing". Right on the spot, I think. Unfortunately the class is cancelled, and in stead I take the alternative "Liquid Light" class, which deals with how to transfer photographs to "any kind" of material. It fell short of my expectations, but the notion still follows me for a while.

During spring, I get my own computer, and send new applications for funding, still with no yield. In June, I start working with the clay.

The fall of 2000 mostly revolves around teaching and working on the Metamorphosis exhibit. The textile project has been put far behind in my consciousness, it is in a state of hibernation. It is almost a year since I worked seriously on it. Sometimes I come across a colour combination that stays with me. The distance is also shown in how the ideas I do register are mostly new, or alternative solutions without much connection to my visual material.

This fall I also spend a great deal of time on assignments in connection with a class in research methodology, and the phenomenon of researching your own practice using log notes.

By the end of January 2001, I finally put away the ceramic objects for "Metamorphosis". The clay dust has been washed off my studio, which now awaits me; clean, and reasonably tidy. Even though ideas and thoughts have faded in the last year, my theme and imaginary world is still present. I have gathered a lot of visual material, all ready to be examined and processed. My new computer skills have given me a new tool to use for that exact purpose. Apart from my family obligations, there seem to be few commitments this spring, other than planning sessions and meetings at the Academy, and a job being the consultant for a public commission. "Metamorphosis" has been parked, and I can finally focus on the main event – my very own solo exhibit. My detour took longer than originally planned, and the weeks fly by. Now, all I have to do is start.

# Restart

## Being a Sleuth

Seven and a half months to go

So where do you start after a one year pause in a work process? I begin by revising. I read the log, spread out the old, visual idea and sketch material together with kitchen photos, computer print-outs, and different quality textiles, each with distinct radiation and feel. The log helps me remember thoughts, and the physical material brings me back to the right wavelength. In some ways I am back where I started a year and a half ago, reviewing all the ideas I have been through, doubting whether or not to continue with the photographs, and if so, how.

The minute I sit down by the computer to work on it some more, all doubts become irrelevant and non-existing. From here on in, the process runs itself, and I am absorbed by the seemingly endless possibilities residing in technology. How a few clicks on the mouse can transform an entire picture. Photograph after photograph is processed and examined. The forms and cut-outs are found, processed, turned and twisted, and put together as whole surfaces. Myself, I am the sleuth, sniffing for tempting goodies in the flow of visual information coming out of the printer.

I make a decision. My computer experiments are going to end up as hand printed textiles, and I want to print with photographically transferred screens. To the extent possible, I will use computer technology in the work process, in the sketching phase where the photos are processed, and further on the way via colour separation to transparent films, prepared to be transferred to the screen mesh<sup>2</sup>. This means I need to further improve my computer skills.

Now, that I know more of the work ahead of me, I can make a timeframe for the time I have left. I roughly divide the work into periods, marking when they need to be done so that I will finish in time:

- Idea / Sketching phase. Researching and developing the visual material.
- Preliminary work. Preparing the sketches for screens, and making them.
- Test printing and testing phase.
- Production phase
- Finishing the work

For the time being, I can still play around. It does feel like playing. The work is pleasurable and intense, and I worry little about practical limitations and other troubles. These reservations exist, but are quickly forced aside. Right now, I do not want to knowingly censor myself.

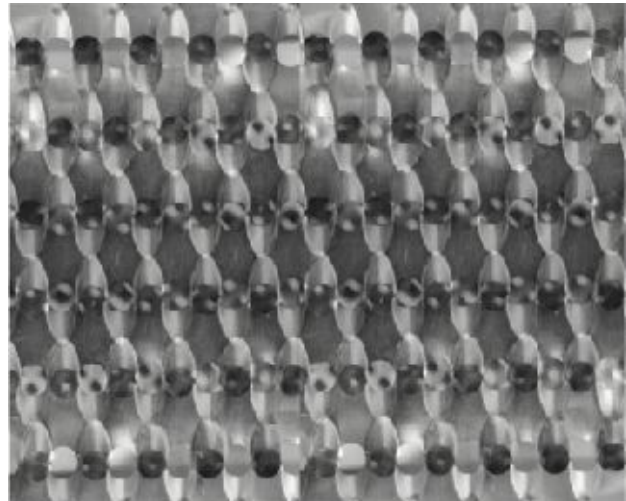
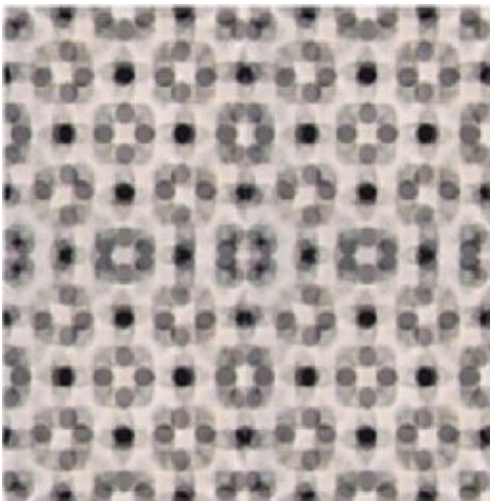
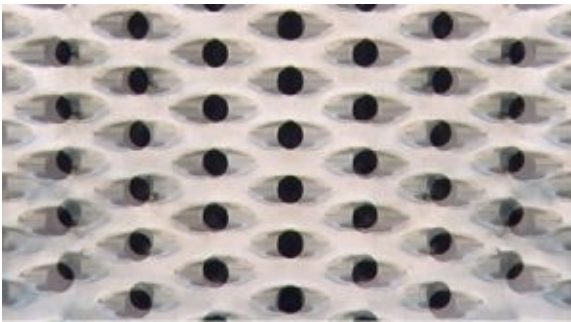
I like to juggle these elements around, one draft turns into ten new ones, the process seems unstoppable, and there are more and more possibilities I simply *must* test.

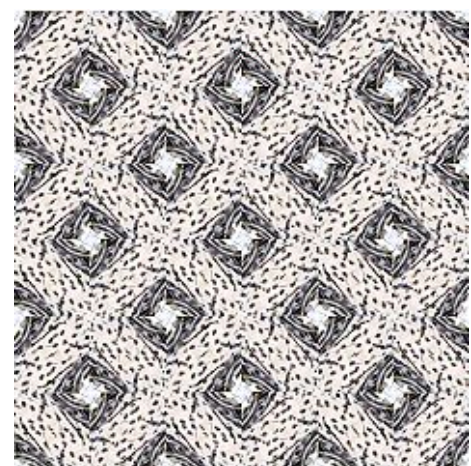
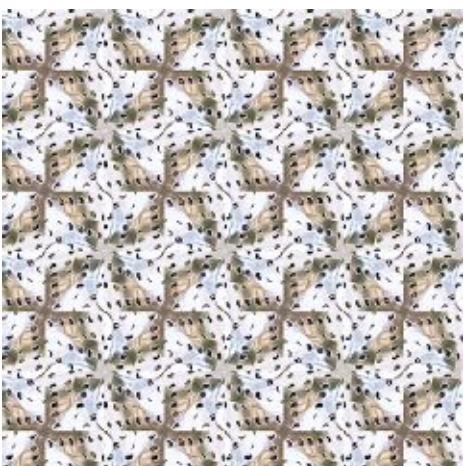
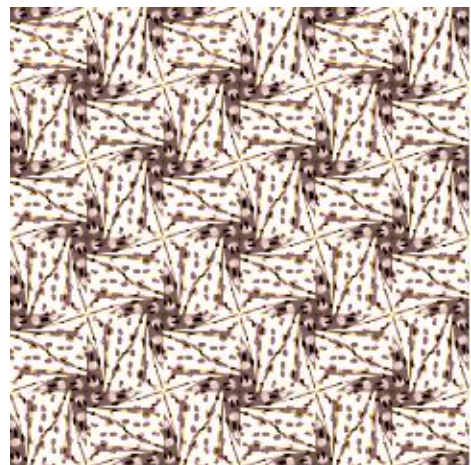
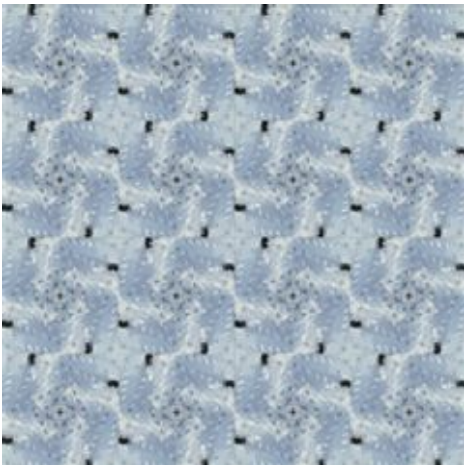
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<sup>2</sup> Pictures of films and screen p. 24 and 27

After a while, my work method becomes automatic: Marking a detail, new layer, copy, rotate 90, 180, and 270 degrees, put together, combine, copy, paste, paste, paste.... This makes repetitive patterns, and many of them. I change my work method to break the routine, but I soon decide to regard the effects of the patterns as a challenge I can possibly cultivate.

Some of the photographs, researched and developed in Photoshop:







Although the first part of this phase is open, intuitive and has little censorship, while I work I continuously assess what happens, and dismiss ideas I instinctively think are useless. Other ideas need time to mature. The sketches I like best at night are not necessarily the ones I prefer in the morning. And something I have been dissatisfied with might show "promise" later on. In other words, I constantly evaluate in my mind; in – out – in – out – out – out! (And perhaps back in again.) Sometimes I lay out the sketches / print-outs to look at them, and make a summary of my thoughts in the log. From that, I get an impression of what works and that influences what I choose to do next.

In the very first summary, I describe what I call "the cut-out with nine holes from a pasta spoon" as very, very exciting. The next time, the cut-out is renamed "The abstracted holes", and is on the top-three list of possible potent ways to go.

The open phase has become narrower. I am becoming increasingly interested in the nine holes, I start thinking about practical solutions, picture them as ready textile pieces, but I have still not made any choice.

After a taking a break in the process to deal with the yearly annual balance and tax returns, I start getting tired. I want to move on, it is time to make some decisions and put them into life. But I need to know more before the final decision of what ideas I want to continue to develop. Once again, I spread out the illustrations on the printing table. The sketches I still believe to have potential I try out in a model resembling the exhibition room. I consider formats, number of pieces, visual effects working together in the room, cooperation, and tension while I wonder whether or not it is important that the kitchen theme is clear. I consider the practical implications. What is feasible, taking into consideration physical limitations, time and costs? What solutions will give the most latitude and room for variation, and what do I want to do the most?

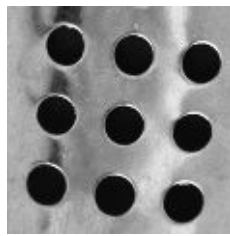
One and a half month after the sketching process started, I clear away piles of computer print-outs. Left are my "abstracted holes", a series of prints with different answers to the same theme. From these, I pick out five-six sketches I want to continue working on. A red-letter day – an important choice has been made!

But why did I choose this? First, a description of "the abstracted holes":

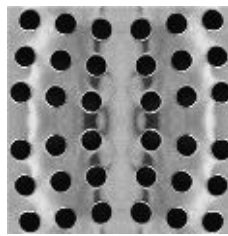
The nine holes belongs to the bottom of my pasta spoon. From the photograph of the spoon, I have extracted a square detail where these three times three holes are tilted towards the square. Bright light and dark shadows are making uneven stripes and tones in the background. The cutout has been copied four times, inverted vertically and horizontally, and put together as a new square, symmetric around the middle lines. This square forms a unit I can use for building up new surfaces, by again repeating it in different ways, like inversion, or rotation. When two pairs of matching, half-transparent surfaces are put on top of each other, twisted and shifted, new images are made where the motives interfere on each other. Small movements in one layer makes has big, visual impact, and shifting geometrical systems are formed before any are fixed.



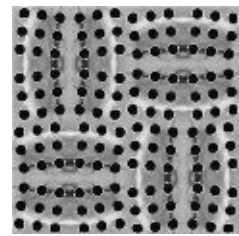
Pasta spoon



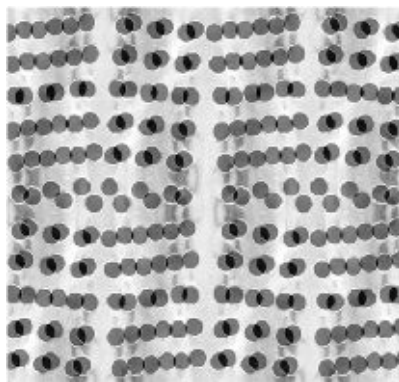
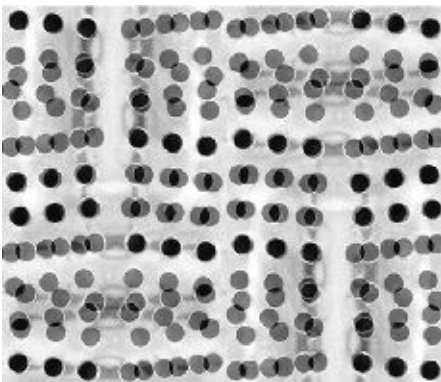
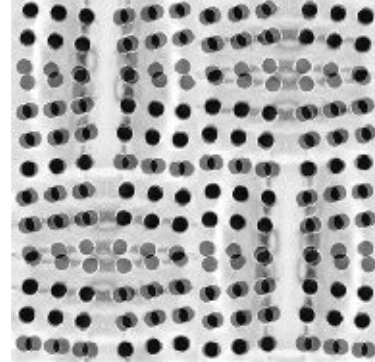
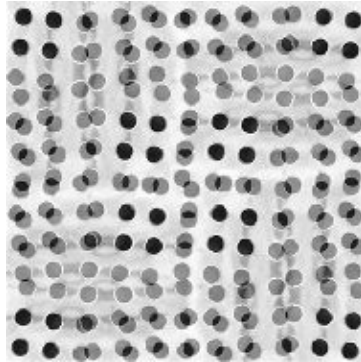
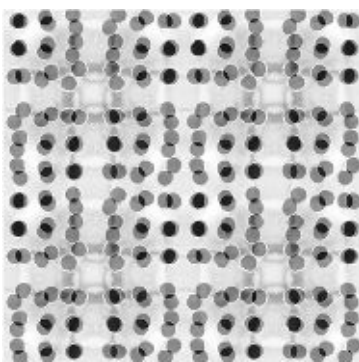
Detail



Basic unit



Rotation



"The abstracted holes"

The way I see it, these systems are logically constructed, but difficult to catch. Your eyes will look for a fixed point, they think they have found one, but lose it again. And again. You will gaze into the picture surface, looking for order. The systems are seemingly stable and still. They are kept in place by the frames; however, inside the frames there is a vibrating energy, and movements threatening to blow them up.

The log notes say quite a lot about why I picked this idea in stead of others. First and foremost it tells that I have found what I was looking for when I started the process, which I find interesting and challenging, and makes me anxious to continue. The hidden logic, the double meaning, the contrasts, and the tension between stability and imbalance, between calmness and agitation in the picture surface as shown in the sketches interest me, and challenge me as an observer. I want to try to recreate these tensions in a large format, and I am excited to see what will come out of combining different textiles and techniques. I also believe that the results could work uniting and consistently in the exhibition room, as a series of variations over a theme.

The fact that the different variations can be deciphered into quite simple fragments, and be rebuilt out of the same units, only in different module systems, makes it possible to limit the number of screens. This is beneficial with regards to time spent, work amount, and finances. Compared with some of the other ideas I have considered, this is basically the most feasible, with regards to time as well as practicalities. The simple means also make it the most flexible and convenient.

"The abstracted holes" says basically what it is: abstracted. And the connection to its origin, and the kitchen sphere is invisible. Working in front of the computer has taken me from the kitchen's world of figurative objects, to non-figurative circles put into a system, and I quite like that. I have emptied the objects of their meaning, now it is about playing with the visual understanding, and about filling the circles, making them interesting, without defining content. In other words, I am back on a familiar track. The abstracted world with colours, shapes, and organising elements is a world I know and feel very comfortable in.

Now, I talk about consequence and totality in the exhibition room as a positive thing, and I have moved far from my original project idea from two years back, where the pieces were individual and the working title was "Kitchen Research".

5-6 sketches are picked from the "abstracted holes" pile. I want to continue with these, because they most clearly represent what interest me: The excitement, which in the log is described as somewhat disturbing, that the sketches are not completely balanced, that they have a not very obvious, but surprising rhythm. Besides, together they form a nice unity, because they – despite their relation – have rather different expressions. Those I rejected were too steady, sturdy, evident, and too easily completed.

Exploring my illustrations has resulted in a few sketches I am very satisfied with, which have the sensation I want to try and transfer to textile. To me, it is unusual that my sketches are so near completion, and that I know so much about the result beforehand. Normally, I work in a different way. I like to explore possibilities with regards to technique and materials, search and be surprised over what can happen in the physical process, and to use this in the construction of my pieces: Knowing *how* before *what*. Now I know *what*, but not yet *how*.

And that I need to know! I am approaching a new phase in my work. In addition to the selection process, I have begun to prepare myself for what is in store; I have skimmed through computer theory and old notes from classes I have taken on colour separation and how to transfer motives to film, but never actually done in real life. Even though I am a little concerned about my lacking insight and overview over the challenges in computer and print technicalities awaiting me, I am uplifted and happy about my "abstracted holes". I am in good spirits and ahead of schedule!

## **Being a Squirrel, an Octopus and Stray Animal**

Six months to go

Both good spirits and plenty of time will prove useful. The next phase presents me with stress and worries, and when it finally ends I am far behind schedule. Now, it is all about making my tools: the printing screens.

Some few, small computer print-outs in black and white and grey tones are going to end up as textile pieces. After trying with the models I know what size I want them to be: Worryingly large. I have considered textile qualities as I have moved along, but still my only clear idea is that the pieces have to be steady and tight, not soft and loose.

The motive will be built using screens. Now I need to figure out what these screens are going to look like. How am I going to divide the motive in different print colours, without losing the essential part of the sketches, but having it reappear when I put the parts back together in an enlarged version at the printing table?

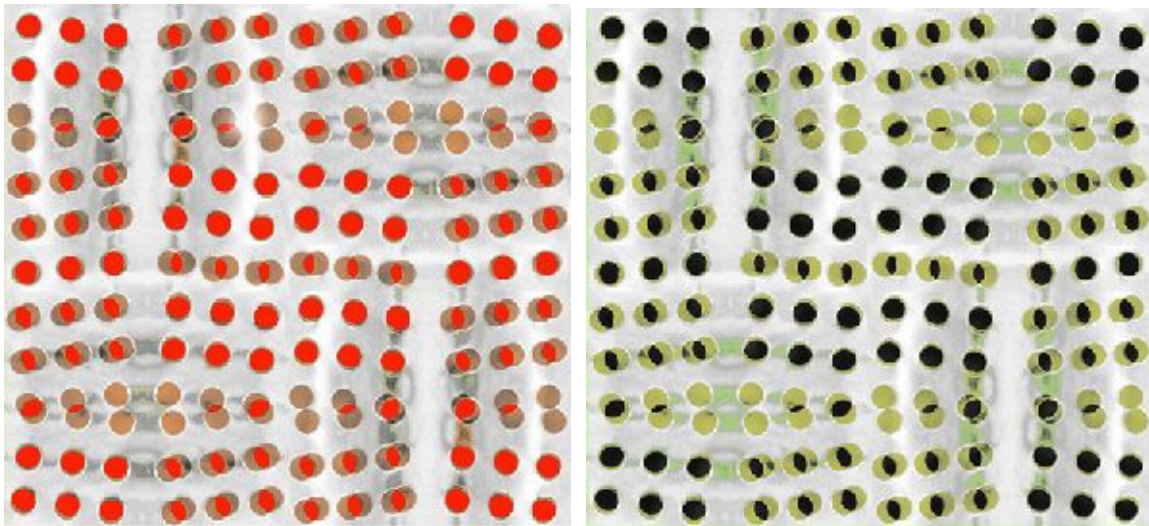
I am going to transfer the parts of the motive onto the screens photographically. For that, I need transparent films, one for each print colour of which the motive consists. I need to get the films printed digitally some place where they can process large film widths. However, the computer file with the film I have to do myself, so they are printed out in the right size and resolution. How on earth do I do that?

The size I have chosen makes me worried about the actual implementation. I need to clarify whether or not the project is realisable the way I want before I start. First of all, the width of the material presents certain limitations. The pieces will have twice the width of the table, and have to be printed in two turns, one half each time. Is that possible to do without ruining the transitions? Will there be room to shift the screen within the width of the table for each turn? Will I even be able to handle screens this size by myself, or will I need help? In which case, who are going to help me? Will I have to hire someone, and how will I be able to pay this person? And will I find textiles wide enough for me to print the entire motive without having to lengthen it, in a quality I can use, or will I have to stitch two fabric lengths together, and if so – is it possible without destroying the motive?

Questions, and more questions. By going over the sketches again, and finding the construction of those I have picked, which is both hard to see and hard to repeat, some of my questions are answered. Others cannot be answered until I am in the situation. Despite the uncertainties, I still decide to go on.

From now on, two activities are going on parallelly: The attempt of figuring the computer issues out and other problems while working on the sketches, and also leading the life of an octopus; arms in all directions, trying to get hold of the information I will need.

Back to the computer. As far as construction goes, there is no problem. All the sketches are based on eight repetitions of the same element. This element constitutes the base. At this point, I have to analyse the sketches. Which image fragments are they made of, and which stands out the most? The holes are clearly visible. In between some of them, there is a darker band, originally a shadow effect on the pasta spoon. The background has an irregular tone with different shades. Now, I need to figure out how to distribute these fragments on the screens. Because of that, I move over to working with colours. In the transition from grey notes to colour, another interpretation is required. What is really the colour of that grey tone? This is the beginning of a new, but shorter phase where I try out different possibilities. When I am through with this, I will also be ready to make the film files.



Colour tests

I also keep familiarising myself with the landscape I am about to enter. Who, for instance, can print out the films for me? How much will it cost, and roughly how much will the screen frames cost? Where can I get a hold of textiles that are wide enough, can be printed on, and in addition are in accordance with my idea?

I send out requests everywhere, by e-mail, fax, and telephone, and return with product names, fabric samples, prices, addresses, new telephone numbers, expert help, tips, and some good advice. Already in the first round of calls it becomes clear that wide materials do exist, and soon I start testing how the fabric samples are suited for printing.

The film print-outs turn out to be a bigger problem. After a great number of telephone calls, both domestic and international, I am still unable to find anyone able to

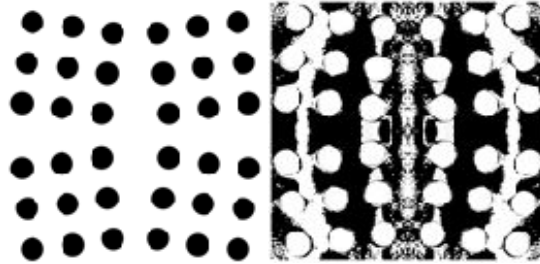
handle the width I need. I consider a number of emergency solutions, but even these are disturbingly expensive. I am really stressed by the situation. I am about to accept that I have to patch the films together from smaller pieces myself (with all the inaccuracy that entails), when I finally get lucky. After six weeks of searching, I find a company which offers films ready spliced – only lengthwise – and the price is not off-putting. One headache less....but.....I do not know that they will do a good job!

There are other concerns as well, and my anxiety level is rising. All the price listings have made me worry about the costs. The exhibition project has still not recieved any financial support, and now I am trying to look into if there still are some final straws to grasp. Without being very hopeful, I send the last three applications.

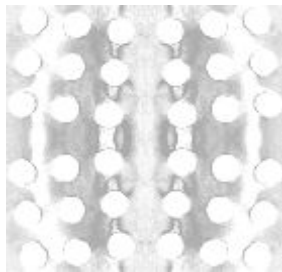
The work on the film files is not running smoothly. I get some expert help and information over the phone, and apparently I have to scan the pasta spoon photo again, and repeat each process, from scratch.

Also, I struggle with my work rhythm. All the practical investigation, Easter, many meetings at the Academy, packing and sending the pieces to the Metamorphosis exhibit – all of this and more – gets in the way of my concentration. I find myself in an unfamiliar technical territory. My sketches are complicated, and it is hard to keep track of all the different things I am working on. Each interruption forces me to spend a lot of time finding my way back to where I last finished, trying to remember where I was. I am close to panicking. Time is pressing.

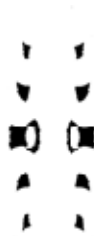
After much effort and scrolling in Photoshop, the picture is as clear as it gets. I need five screens: three big ones, one smaller, and one very little. At last I finish what seems like a lifetime in front of the computer, and the film files are sent to print. Now, all that is left is waiting and hoping; hoping that the films will turn out like they should when I get them back.



Positive films for transferring to the screen meshes:



Holes



Bottom



Rasterised bottom

Space

Overprint

The different tasks I have in this period, lead to a life where my home computer is only one stop on my route. My own studio, and the different premises of the Academy are others. This wandering from one work place to another continue until the screens are done, and I start the test printing in my studio.

In between everything else, I continue to prepare for the next level of the process: The photographic transfer of the motive to the screen mesh.

I have: Concluded that the fabric qualities I am interested in are suited for textile printing. Decided that most of my lists over products and retailers are outdated, had them revised, and bought what I need. Stretched out and prepared the old screen frames I am going to use, and recieved the new ones. Based on a very unpretty (but tightly stretched!) frame, found that I at times feel very inexperienced when it comes to this practical handicraft I once knew very well, but have not done in a long time.

And I have: After a short, but intense feeling of pending catastrophe traced photo transferring equipment large enough for my frames at the Academy's graphic workshop; had expert introduction to the equipment, made a sample over lighting times, and also finished a small signature screen (with the girl's head from the silver cup as motive).

When the film arrives, they are more or less perfect. I do the actual photo transferral over a weekend, quite quickly and without problems. Monday morning, 21 Mayscetch, the screens are in my studio, ready to use.

## On the Run

## **Once more a Sleuth – and Busy Bee**

Four months to go

Working on the films has taken a lot longer than planned, and leaves me with a lasting sense of haste, which continue to stress me from now on. Still, this is a situation I have been looking forward to for a long time: Having something concrete and touchable to relate to. Also, things brighten considerably when I receive a positive response on one of my funding applications. For a while, my financial concerns are gone.

The first thing I need to do is trying to print with my screens, and become a little more experienced using them. Will they work the way I thought they would?

Furthermore, I have two plans for the test printing: One, where I purposefully try to recreate the colour expression in selected computer sketches; the other searching, where I try to discover what possibilities lay in this tool by following ideas, and then using the screens differently, with other printing techniques and colour types. What happens if...? One strict and one open line. And then, looking at all the possibilities before me, I decide what I will continue to develop.

I start strict, with colour testing: I try to find colour mixes and combinations which when printed will give the right colour tone, preferably with the same glow and intensity as in the different sketches. I test the strength of the colour, how strong colour percent should the different colour pastes have?

I make plans for the research: Daily schedules, weekly schedules, and schedules for the entire period, ending with summer vacation. I print, hang, consider and experience, revise my plans, and print again – and again.

During the printing process I have important experiences regarding the printing order of the screens, on how the motive interacts with different fabric qualities, on smart, practical tricks, and I get the answer to a so far unanswered question: I will not be able to print the two bottom screens myself – as I had feared, but expected. So I will be needing the help that my next-door working neighbour has offered to me. Sometimes he is able to run between the studios, and can lend me his arms. (This goodwill could perhaps be explained with the fact that he is my husband.) This needs to be taken into consideration from now on: What I need help printing, I need to print while the help is present.

I also find that the sinks in my studio are too small for me to use for washing of the big printed and fixed textiles. Thus, I need to bring them to the Academy, and do it there. My straying days were not quite over after all. Since the fabrics I work with are so light, I am afraid that the colours are going to come off during washing, but this seems to go better than expected.

The printing process is complicated and time consuming, and I struggle to find the right colours. I continue to have new ideas for colour positions, which I try out. Certain conceptions, like "an almost invisible piece", one "bright pink", and several others, have appeared in my mind, and I need to pursue them. As I go along, these images take me into rather unknown territory, and this again leads me to other printing techniques and colour

types. The territory is still limited by time, I cannot try everything I want to, I need to choose what I want to focus on. My earliest vision on how the "abstracted holes" should end up, is discarded in this process, there is simply no time to do all the necessary technical test printing. Since I still am a long way from reaching my goal, I continue the colour testing at the same time as I do the new tests.

I print and I print. Slowly but steadily, the room is being filled with hanging textile samples. To maximise efficiency, I work according to strict and full schedules. The schedules demand a real effort, and soon I am consumed in work. I have room for little else in my life, I use weekends and late nights; lunch breaks and other time outs only seem like derailing. This is the beginning of a one-tracked and monotonous existence, which will last during the entire printing process.

The work schedules are structured and well thought through, but need constant revisions. All the time, something new happens which forces me to think in new ways. For instance, my help might need to go away, an accident could happen, my plans are too ambitious, or the tests renders exciting results which changes the direction I am going in.

When I try other techniques and colour types, I follow some kind of structured principle of want, and once more; one idea leads to another and pushes the process forward. The screens are now used in ways, which present completely different images and expressions than my sketch material. The tests excites me, and I think that there are many interesting things happening. In the back of my mind, I continue to evaluate what could be used in this context: *If* and *how* the different expressions can be put together in the exhibition room.

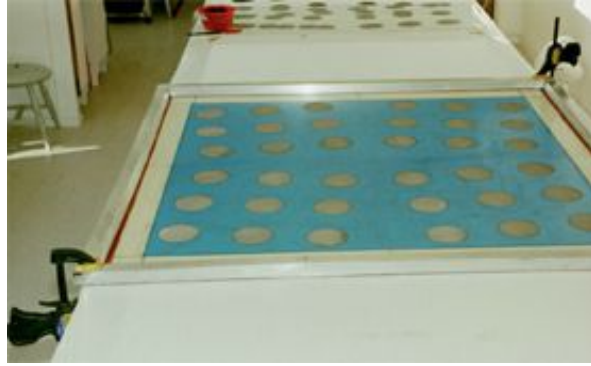
For a while I work more or less parallelly in three different directions:

- With the colour tests in transparent colours, where I, based on the computer sketches, eventually decide on some grey tones I like and am ready to continue with.
- With nontransparent pigment colours, where I pursue the idea of "the almost invisible piece".
- With a resist technique giving negative, or "reversed" effects, where the result is hard to picture in advance.

Colour and technique testing:



The first tests



Hole screen



Grey tones



Pigment colour tests – "the almost invisible piece"



From the studio



At one point, my helper informs me he has to go away for a period of time. This causes a swift and severe change of all plans. I have to try and make a complete piece as soon as possible, to take advantage of the helping hands before they disappear. The test printing I can do by myself. A quick review tells me what is left to try out before I might feel safe enough to embark upon the real printing, and I go to work. Then I hang the test material to size it up.

- Colour tests: During this process I have repeatedly considered the idea to do the entire exhibition in grey tones, and this is still the case. I like the grey tests, and I think that they accentuate the different displacements.

- Pigment tests: Some of the pigment tests are interesting, but I realise that right here, right now, it is a dead end. There are no longer any visible trace of displacements.

- Resist tests: But the resist test, on the other hand! One of the whims I tested had a very good outcome; the results are very exciting, and I see several possibilities. They are quite a long way from my starting point, but they are still about displacements, and that makes me curious. How will they appear if put together to a whole surface? I know I am taking a risk, but I am too excited not to. Soon the first white, virginal fabric is stretched on the printing table, ready to receive colour.

I prepare thoroughly for the printing. There are many things to remember, to keep track of, and many things that can go wrong. I make checklists and an action plan for each step, covering all eventualities. I work with extreme concentration and my heart in my mouth. Still, I learn more and more about the importance of being alert the entire time. It is a long and nerve-wrecking process, but I manage to avoid any major accidents, and eventually, I can view the three first, possibly "finished" pieces hanging from the wall of my studio<sup>3</sup>.

But I do not feel like looking at them. I feel sceptical and ambivalent, and I do not think I am able to see them properly. They are so different from my sketched ideas and point of departure, and I am not sure if I like it, I am not even sure that I like my idea sketches any more. I need a break, need to look at everything with rested, relaxed eyes. As the spring semester is coming to an end, I do not feel completely comfortable with my work. Taking a summer vacation has been a practical necessity, now it is also something I need, physically and mentally.

Physically, because I am tired after having worked non-stop, with unhealthy long hours over a long period of time. And it is heavy physical labour: Large screens to be lifted and handled; difficult, crooked fabrics are to be drawn and stretched, and wringed and managed when they are wet and heavy. I am exhausted, my body hurts, my back, arms, hands, and fingers ache, and according to my log all I want to do is toss my arms aside on a soft pillow.

Mentally because of the time pressure; the fact that it is so time consuming to make one single piece; that I need to be so very concentrated at all times; that I can never relax, but need to be constantly watchful; that I do not really have time to make mistakes; that I do not know what I think of the things I have done; and the fact that this exhibition is that important to me.

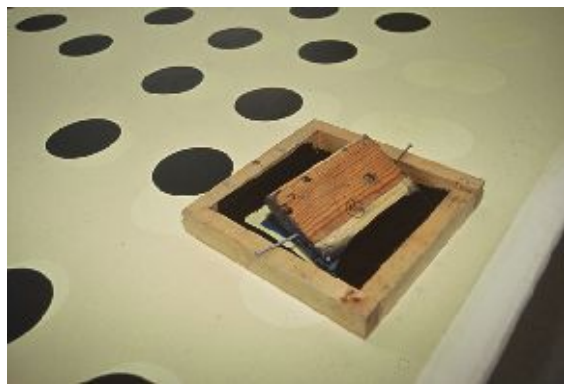
In addition, I am dealing with a new and serious concern. In the middle of this all-engrossing, artistic work, a letter comes from my local tax authorities. They actually, absurd as it sounds, have doubts of me being an actively working artist. The last week before vacation, all my concentration is put into clearing up this issue. It involves hectic communication and correspondence with attorneys and tax authorities, and the fortunate resolution only comes eight months later. Right now, it creates uproar in my life, and kills any little spark I might have had left.

When I brought the screens over, my studio was empty and white, and now it is filled with colours and textiles. I leave them gladly, but not content.

Working on the first three pieces:

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<sup>3</sup> Picture series p.29 and 30



**"She never stumbles, she's got no place to fall" <sup>4</sup>**

One and a half month to go

When I come back after my vacation, I am excited to know what my first impression will tell me about what I left. However, it is not very encouraging. I get almost the exact same impression. I am still sceptical, but one of the pieces – in my mind named "The light-light green" – has improved its potential a great deal over the summer. It is simple and a bit peculiar, and I almost think I like it!

<sup>4</sup> Bob Dylan: "Subterranean Homesick Blues" 1967 ("She belongs to me")

So, I have one potentially finished piece, and not many weeks left to make a few more. The testing is over, it is time to put my test material to use. It is time to go through with my original ideas from the computer sketches. As of now, I know I am going to print what I call the "green piece", the "red piece", and the "grey piece", and I know what type of displacements they are going to have. I clear away all the tests I will not use, and go to work.

With that begins a phase filled with scheduled and structured slave labour: Stretching the white textile on the printing table, dead straight, galls on my knuckles. Measuring, marking, fixing the marking threads. Mixing the colour pastes. Printing with the hole screen, the middle, bottom and raster screen. Displacing the systems, repeating the process. One print, drying/waiting. Washing the screen in the meantime. Lifting the screen back and forth between the printing table and the screen sink. One print, more waiting. Measuring the overprints, cutting the stencils, drawing a system for moving the stencils of the same size, overprinting with the small screen. Off with the fabric, washing the table, displacing the fabric, stretching out the other side – and repeating the entire process. Then, starting over with a new piece.

While printing I have to:

Remember to check that the thread system, making out the register marks, have exactly the same measures as the slightly crooked screens, and what has already been printed. Checking that everything is clean and dry, included my fingers; that the plastic protection is in place; that spatulas and clean fillers are available; that the screen is placed correctly according to the system sketches; revising what way it potentially should be turned at the next printing; trying to see the threads as the screen is put down, remembering to remove them before printing, remembering to put them back afterwards, making sure that the screens have been attached with clamps... and all the time making sure that there is no dripping, or that I still spill something. There are many ways in which to spill.

Sometimes, routine is broken by me having to go and buy something I need. Apart from that, the days are the same, and I know what I need to do from day to day. I spend a lot of time planning. My schedules describes the activities and goals for each day and each week. They are only revised when something unforeseen happens, or when I have miscalculated the time frames, which occurs less and less, because I note down how much time I spend on the different work processes.

Eventually I feel secure and experienced enough to try working on three pieces at the same time<sup>5</sup>. Some of the colours can be printed on all three pieces, and even though it is a nerve-wreckingly amount of systems to get lost in, this means that the process runs much more efficiently.

As soon as the textiles are ready printed, I fixate them and bring them with me to the Academy for washing, a task I find tiring, hot, wet, raw... and sweaty! Then, I take them back for ironing, before I hang them up.

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<sup>5</sup> Photo series p.32



Colour blends



Print colours



"Green piece"



...a while later



Liquid water glass solution to fix the colours



Three pieces at once



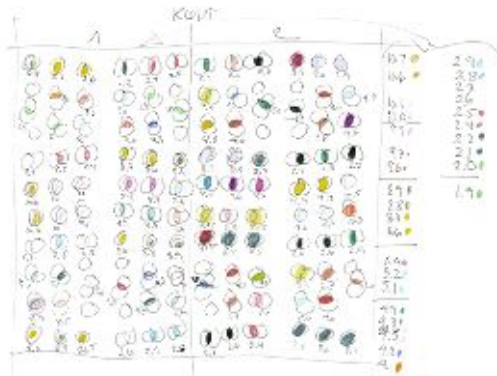
Overprinting "Red piece"



Stencils for overprinting



Putting on the water glass solution



System for moving the stencils



Fixation, left over night



Ironing



More ironing

Now, I have four new, printed pieces to evaluate: one "green", one "red" and two "grey". I especially like the two grey pieces. They turned out just the way I wanted, and in spite of their greyness, they are the most succulent. I am still not sure that I made the right choice by not going with the entirely grey option, but on the other hand, I am quite pleased with what I see.

However, I am not pleased that the pieces will come out in different sizes and formats. This is unavoidable, because they are shifted in different distances, and it does not surprise me. Still, it will make the presentation more difficult.

At the same time as I print, I keep trying to figure out how I can put together the pieces in the exhibit room. Formats, colours, and the different expressions are continuously being matched together in a show room model. I believe there are room for five or six pieces, depending on which I pick out.

I also think about the completion. How should I finish each of the pieces? And, on a purely practical note, how am I going to hang them? I know I would like them flat, tight, with no seams, and that they have to stand out from the wall in some way. For a while I am considering stretching the textiles around a picture-frame to make them as tight as possible, and by that, cultivate the displacements. It is a good idea, but it will give me a few practical problems, so I decide against it. After trying a number of remedies, I get an idea of how I can solve this, and I settle for that.

The opening of the exhibition draws nearer; I select the image for the invitation, and write a few words for the press release.

And I think about titles. Mostly, my mind circles around cool, neutral names describing the variations in the displacements, such as "Rotation", "Cross", "Fan" and so forth. Or, how about the practical descriptions I have used in order to keep the pieces apart: "one down", two down" "45 degrees to the right", etc?

But there is still time and fabric left.

In addition to the four pieces I printed last, I also have the three I made before the summer vacation. I have rejected two; they are definitely not going to the exhibition, but the "light light green" I would like to include. However, It has a different expression than the last

four, and I am worried that it might be a little too different to fit in. Therefore, I would like to print two more using the same technique, and then see if not one of them can be used.

This is pushing the limits, both when it comes to time and patience. I am tired and unmotivated; I can hardly bare the thought of stretching another textile again! Never the less, I do it. I am only halfway happy about the results, and one is immediately rejected. Now, I am all out of fabric, and nothing left to do about it.

## Slowing Down

**"The lights go down and it's just you up there..."<sup>6</sup>**

20 days to go

I need the last week to put up the pieces in the showrooms. The public commission, where I was the consultant, is now running smoothly, so that leaves me with two weeks to finish the individual textile works, wrap them up, and send them.

As the marathon from the printing phase is finished, I now start whirring around, doing a little bit of this and that. All of a sudden, I think I have lots of time, and I am not sure where to begin. I work on the completions, and decide how to cut the pictures, trying out some technical options, and find one that works well. I come up with a good system for hanging the pieces on the wall, and order what I need. I do some small repairs on a couple of the pieces, look at the last one, which is yellow and named "the yellow" accordingly. I am about to reject it. Suddenly I envisage some blue circles being the solution, and soon I am back on the printing table with colour samples, trying to find "the right colour blue".

This treatment makes "the yellow peice" a possible candidate for the exhibition. I clean the floors and remove all the leftover colour from the surroundings. Then I start ironing, tucking in, and finishing the six pieces I have chosen. The fabrics are difficult to

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<sup>6</sup> Joni Mitchell: "For the Roses" 1972

work with. It is difficult to get the squares precise, and again I am fighting time. If there will be five or six pieces going to the exhibit, I will decide on the spot. I think I have solutions for both alternatives:



"The right colour blue"



"The Yellow Piece" together with one of "the grey"



The pieces are rolled together



– and shipped out into the world

When this final effort is over, I roll the pieces together, and ship them out into the world. Once more, my surroundings are empty and white.

"How do I feel now?"

Relieved, uncertain, and increasingly nervous. What is it that I have made, really? Will it measure up? Few people have seen what I have been doing all this time. And soon the results are being exposed to critical glances, and more or less blasé connoisseurs.

I am also worried about unity of in the exhibit. I suspect that some of the pieces will need more space around them than what is possible in the rather small showroom; that they are best displayed as individual works, without having to relate too much to the neighbours. Will the room handle the different sizes, colours, and expressions? Will the colours take each other? Even though there is a logical explanation to the sizes, perhaps they might seem random? Soon, it is time to face myself and the challenge I gave myself in the exhibit application: Not designing the exhibit for the rooms, but let each, individual piece be the main thing, and then put them together to a unity when I hang them on the wall. There is still one more lap to go.

I am packing, sending out the last invitations, and get on the train to Oslo.

My works are waiting for me in Oslo, and so is a surprise. Apparently, parts of the showrooms have been rebuilt since I made the model. This means I have thought in terms of an old version of the rooms. I have to start thinking in new ways. My tests with the model still proves useful. When I now start working with the real rooms, I juggle around familiar sizes, and therefore I can be more efficient.

With the help of an assistant, the pieces are put up for testing, evaluated, and hanged again, in a different order. Some pieces find their place quickly, others are moved around a few times before I decide on a solution I like. Like to some extent, at least. My concerns were not groundless. The heights are different, but only a *little* different. I have not picked the colours because they "match", and now I see that some are even working against each other. Especially "the yellow piece" is hard to place, colour-wise.

I am also surprised over how big a room each piece demands; that they actually need space from the others, and that I, despite what I had pictured, have to place the two "grey" as far apart as possible. Only when they are not visible to one another, they are able to work on their own. (This certainly gives me something to think about when it comes to the constantly returning idea of doing the entire exhibition in grey.) However, I do not find it problematic that the pieces have been made using different techniques. In the end, I remove "the yellow piece", and the other five have each its own wall.

But soon, I am to learn more. One morning I find two of my works laying in piles on the floor. My hanging system turns out to be not quite as smart as I thought. Now, I need to secure and repair the pieces, and also I need to try and iron off all the new creases, they have a tendency of becoming permanent after a short time. For a couple of days, this occupies most of my time.

The lighting is done quickly and effortlessly. I want the works to be lit up so that they stand out from the wall as a concrete and consise shape, more like an object than a flake, like they have been stretched around a picture frame, as I considered earlier. Once we find the way in which to do this, it is fixed easily. For practical reasons I need to find a different solution for the "light light green" piece. Since this piece has a different, light and somewhat vague tone, the lighting emphasises these qualities.

Now, it remains to decide what the pieces should be called, and how much they are going to cost.

On the train, I had plenty of time to think about names. From titles with technical descriptions, my mind wandered over to other spheres and connections: From the colours of the works and a fairytail world, with titles like "Snow/White" and "Sleeping/Beauty", or to the rhythmical repetitions of music, intonations, and pulse, rewriting titles like "A touch of blue".

Eventually, I have a complete list of name suggestions. The problem is that some sound better in English, other in Norwegian, and that the titles come from all these different areas of association. I would prefer to be consistent, both in language and conception.

Preferably, I would like to find simple, down-to-earth descriptions and good words, like "Rotation" and "Connection" in Norwegian, but I find it difficult to do that for all six. In a weak moment, I fall into temptation, avoid the entire problem, and call them "Never-ending story I, II, III, IV, and V". I am not too comfortable with the slightly poetic undertone, but figure that ok, now they are nameless in a way, and that is probably fine. I give up wondering over it anymore, and thereby name my "children". (But they were not to keep their names for long. The titles kept annoying me, and after the exhibition closed, I renamed the pieces quickly to "Displacements I, II, etc", which have been their names since then.

I have deliberately not given much thought to what the price should be. I have not priced anything for a long time, and I feel a little uncertain. I am sure that the organisers are updated, and that they have some thoughts in this matter, and this turns out to be right. It is very nice to have someone else confidently suggest prices, especially since they are much higher than my own estimates.

At this point, almost everything is ready, and I can lean back and look at my work. Did I achieve what I wanted, and what do I really think about what I see?

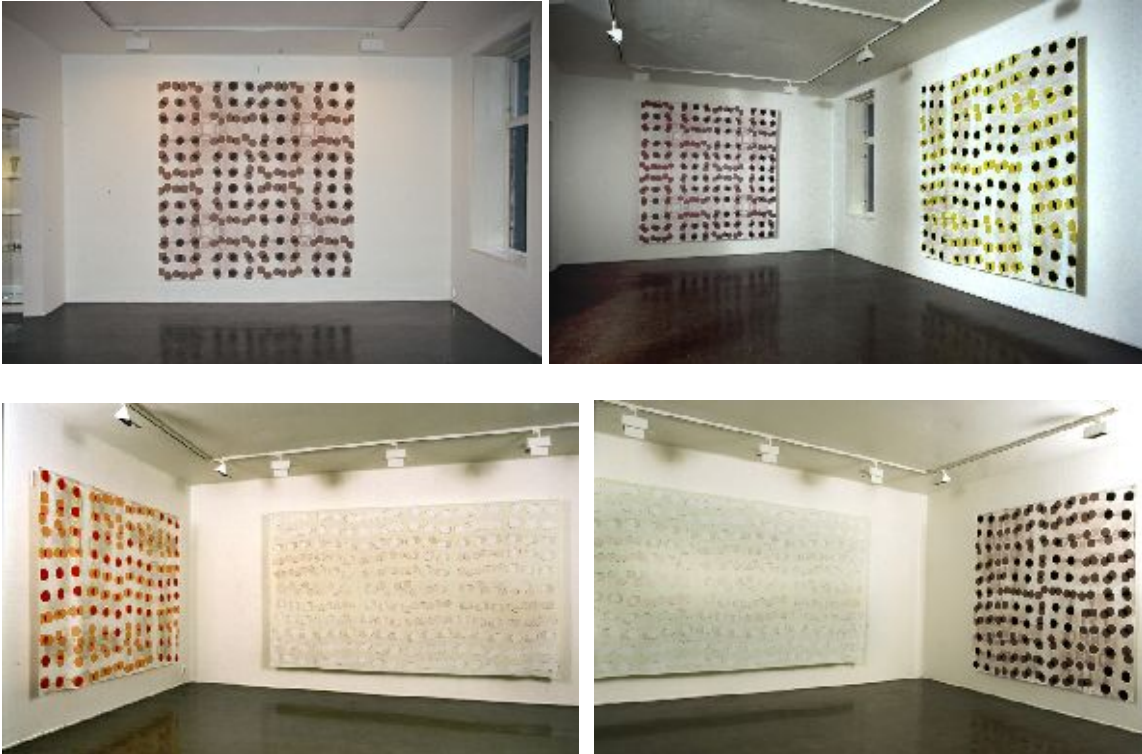
In my log, my answer to the first question is yes, with some reservation. The space is not perfect, and the exhibition seem a little crowded. I would like to see more air around some of the pieces, and I think they would be better in more spacious rooms. Still, the exhibit holds a clarity, simplicity and it has a strange light that I like. I also think that the pieces work well together as a unit, at the same time as I have managed to bring them out as individual pieces.

I am pleasantly surprised over the strength in their individuality, their presence. Also, I am surprised by the, to me, strange and unusual colour relations, which I really like. It looks *strange*, unfamiliar. Did *I* do this? I like having been surprised.

Now, the "Displacements" are going to lead a life of their own.

I am going home to finish the log.

The Exhibit at Kunstnerforbundet, September 2001



**"The rest is silence"? <sup>7</sup>**

Afterwards

"Well, how did it go, the opening, and... Did you sell anything?"

"You know, the opening was fine... lots of people, and ...."

The people, those who spoke to me, said nice things. From my colleagues I received such positive feedback, presented with so much enthusiasm that I almost believed them. But sales? No. Media reviews? No.

So, there they hang, my "Displacements", in the quietness, until they were taken down, sent back, and started the waiting, rolled together in a corner of my studio.

Here, the story ends. Or does it? Maybe it was not that quiet after all? In the long term, it turned out that the pieces had been noticed and appreciated. And from their resting position, they have made shorter and longer trips, both in and out of Norway.

And I *have* made something out of nothing, something that was not there before, something I did not know existed. I have found something I had been looking for, and been surprised at what I found. Like my son, on the opening day, the six-year old says, as he nudges the coat of an elderly lady, and points to one of the pieces: "*My mum* made this".

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<sup>7</sup> William Shakespeare: "Hamlet" 1602



## The Reflection

As I leaned back and viewed the exhibit, all done on the opening day, I was surprised. Surprised over these pieces, so different from everything else I had made prior, the quaint atmosphere I saw in them, the room looking curious and unusual. I felt a sense of wonder over the fact that I had made these things hanging there, that *this* was how they turned out. So why did they end up like this, and why am I wondering?

In this story, shortened and summed-up, the way to the target might seem quite straight forward. However, if I turn and look back, I see a road becoming the path *I* walked in the scrubs. A path full of detours which I had to explore before I went back, and trails ending in nowhere. But I made it. If you walk this path back to the point of departure, you avoid the trails, and you can allow yourself to study the surroundings, feel the weather, trace your own footsteps, register the detours, localise the stones you tripped over, and investigate the phenomenon you maybe did not notice before.

Could I, on this journey through my log, find something that might give me new knowledge about my own work process? Much of it is clear. But will I be able to discover the more hidden connections that I have not noticed before?

## On hallmarks

## Vacuum

As I go back, I quickly notice how varied the terrain is. Back at the starting point, I forget the nature metaphores for a while, and see that the work process has moved through very different phases, challenging both body and mind in many ways.

At first, the work is coloured by playfulness and openness, and creativity and intuition are both in action. Then comes a time for analysis and thinking; problem solving, both theoretically and practically. The next phase demands a great deal of planning, concentration and perseverance. It challenges the body's capacity through repeating and heavy physical labour, not to mention toil. Finally, all loose threads come together, and this period contains elements from all the above.

Still, I see one trait which characterises the entire artistic work process: The vacuum in which it takes place.

What strikes me when I read the log, is the sense of unrest and excitement which shows itself early on in the process, and it soon becomes a steady companion. The words *nervous* and *uneasy* keep returning. The uneasiness is due to the lasting uncertainty about the outcome of my work, and what the final result will be. It is due to the more short-felt, but intense excitement prior to any new and undone task, and is released when something is finished. And then it builds up before the next job. Will everything go well or not? This especially applies to unknown or unfamiliar processes. Like when I am printing the black overprints for the first time, on an almost finished piece, with every chance that an accident may happen. Afterwards, I write in the log: *Everything went well, but I felt quisy from all the tension. Disgusting work!*<sup>8</sup>

In other words, a more or less constant state of tension, making you concentrated and focused. With such a strong focus, you build invisible walls around you, shutting out the outside world. The silence and stillness of this tunnel is remarkable, and your eyes stay focused on the light far away. There are no voices, no discussions about what happens, all the work takes place in solitude, practically without any feedback. The tunnel walls creates a vacuum, and this makes the process a lonely, but purposeful journey.

What does living in a vacuum entail? Obviously, concentration and focus is needed to do anything properly. But after a while, the isolation and lack of artistic feedback makes me insecure about what I really do.

My uneasiness is reflected by my weariness of reactions when the opening approaches, and how *wonderful it is* for me *to hear*<sup>9</sup> positiv reviews of my work, when an authority in the field finally, and accidently, stop by my studio and gives unasked praise. I suck it in; praise is very confirming. It is perfectly normal to feel uncertain prior to an exhibition opening, but I would like to think that my uncertainty increases because of the vacuum I have been in for such a long time.

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<sup>8</sup> 12.08 – 01, p.106 Quotes from the log are in italics, with entry date and page number.

<sup>9</sup> 16.09 – 01, p.118

The isolation also affects the mounting in the exhibit rooms. There, for the first time, the pieces meet a competent audience in the form of other artists and people who work with art. Now, I have voices around me, expressions and opinions. The fact that I am so receptive to these opinions gives me one positive and one negative experience.

I appreciate the opinions. They confirm my own; and, as the log states: they *enabled me to make quicker decisions*<sup>10</sup>. Acknowledgement from others strengthens my belief that the decisions I have made were right; in fact, communication with others can speed up the process. However, in this case, I believe the efficiency is a result of the consensus. One can only wonder what disagreement would result in – all communication and discussion does not necessarily have the same positive effect. Still, it might be a risk worth taking in periods of deep concentration, trying to make some peep-holes through the tunnel walls. I probably have something to learn in this area.

A different example of what acknowledgement can do with the insecurity following isolation, is from the pricing discussion. There, I was happy to let the expertise take charge. This is the situation: I have presented my suggestions, and think that I have pushed it a little. In the log, I comment on what happened next: *Sometimes it feels so good to leave the decision-making to others. I was glad to hear her raise the price, and felt my self-esteem rising. Modesty is not always a virtue. I felt noticeably more secure and proud of my work. Interesting*<sup>11</sup>. The price adjustment works as a confirmation of my work being "worth something" – more than I thought, actually. As the price goes up, so does my confidence. My joy over leaving a little responsibility to others is understandable, seeing as the amount of little and big decisions I have made on my own throughout the work process. But joy can be deceitful. Like in my attempts to name the pieces: For a while I had considered different titles, and what entry points they give to the understanding of my works. At this point, I have a few titles I quite like, but I struggle a little with the two last ones. In a moment of what has to be called weakness, I fall for a suggestion from the sideline. Even though I am sceptical, and not quite comfortable with the content of the words I hear, I say okay. My uncertainty, and comfort in letting other people decide are in other words beginning to weaken my judgement. At the last moment I make a wrong decision. It soon becomes clear that I dislike the names, and I change them.

One could ask whether this misjudgement is merely due to the joy that someone finally had an opinion about my work, or if I am in fact easily influenced, and could have made one mistake after the other if I had let people speak out more than I did. Perhaps I need my tunnel, without the peep-holes?

## **Atmosphere**

If the walls of the tunnel can work as a picture of my surroundings, the thick net of branches around my path, it seems appropriate to also talk about the weather.

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<sup>10</sup> 26.09 – 01, p.120

<sup>11</sup> 26.09 – 01, p.122

The work process can roughly be described like this: I make up a problem to solve. The first part is concerned with the idea work, the second with materialising the ideas.

I had a clear point of departure when I began the digital sketching process in February. I had already made some arbitrary attempts; now I use a month and a half to develop my visual material into an idea and a motive I want to explore and make. Later, I use five months to do just that.

If I return to the path, I quickly discover how the weather changes in the transition from thought to reality. Behind me is an almost cloudless sky. Now, dark clouds drift towards me, and linger. Except for the occasional ray of light, they stay in the picture for a long time. The sky only clears when the journey is about to end. Another clear trait of the work process is in other words how different the atmosphere is in these two phases.

Under the blue sky in the beginning, in front of the computer, there is little outside movement, but all the more happens on the inside. My body is calm, thought and perception work together without over-exerting, but what they do causes big mood variations. Excitement alternates with pessimism. Tediousness with joy. But still, when I describe the activities in the log, it is joy and excitement that dominate, and best describe the atmosphere in this phase. I use words like *fun*, *uplifted*, *intense* and *absorbed*<sup>12</sup>, and I write that I feel happy, and is *beside myself with enthusiasm*<sup>13</sup>.

Why this euphoria? Because even though I am hunting, it feels like I am playing. I work intuitively, and I knowingly put off serious decision-making regarding the sketches. I allow the process to flow according to what feels like its own logic, but perhaps it is more my own logic that is being followed, it flows quickly and quite easily. I am comfortable in this state, where I, thanks to my computer, have the feeling of receiving more than I give. And I have given myself plenty of time for this part of the work. When I eventually want to move on, it is because I am a little tired of it, and it is easy to make choices and decisions. So this phase is quite smooth, and results in sketches I am content with, and leaves me with a positive attitude as far as the coming work is concerned.

Then, things get serious. I suddenly have to face the facts of what it entails to realise my ideas. The dark clouds come drifting, accompanied by reality, and it makes me worried. I am worried about the practical problems I meet, and those I see coming; I worry about the expenses I know I will have in this process; and I worry about time – it passes by very quickly. As the process moves forward, I feel increasingly stressed and pressed for time. Each test print takes an eternity, and I find it very frustrating. In my log, I write about the test printing: *This takes forever!!! Still feel that I am very far from anything usable. Feel very stressed out and tired*<sup>14</sup>. The lack of time forces me to structure my work. As opposed to the playful beginning, my days are now marked by strict and full work schedules. Everything is about time, time, time – or lack thereof.

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<sup>12</sup> For example 15.02, 16.02 and 01.03 – 01, p.50, 51, 52 and 56

<sup>13</sup> 15.03 – 01, p.63

<sup>14</sup> 27.05 – 01, p.88

Even though I am excited and and thrilled over the preliminary test results, and even more by the more finished results, my main impression of the last months is the work intensive, focused, stressed, frustrated, and sometimes pessimistic atmosphere surrounding my work.

## More on Clouds

My frustrations are based on practicalities, finance and time. The practical problems I learn to deal with, but the financial reality makes me discouraged and pessimistic. *I will never do another exhibit, it involves nothing but costs*<sup>15</sup>, I have stated in my log, slightly ironically. Now, these problems are also solved for a month or so, when my project actually receives external financial support. But they return when the tax authorities find it appropriate to question my professional status as an artist. Not knowing the outcome of this case, which could have tremendous financial consequences for me, hangs over me, like a threatening cloud the rest of the project period, and puts its mark on the atmosphere.

But first and foremost it is the limited time that bothers me. This lack of time, which I, willingly, have partially inflicted upon myself by risking getting involved in an extra exhibit. Still, one thing is the actual amount of time available, quite another is how you choose to spend it.

For one, I am busy due to a more or less logical consequence of the idea I have decided to work on. Even though I have described it in my log as *the most feasible, in terms of time and practicalities*<sup>16</sup> with regards to my material, it is complicated enough, both with regards to the computer analysis and the printing itself. I know this from the start. What I perhaps do not know is how frustrating it is, and I underestimate how much time each task requires.

In addition, I have made part of the work a learning process, based upon the wish of acquiring new knowledge. The computer processing, which converts my sketches into four films, is unknown territory for me, and a rough terrain it is. The complexity of the sketches combined with the unfamiliarity result in quite a bit of fumbling and mess, and operations that need to be repeated. In this period I also have a number of other, external tasks to take care of. External disruptions interferes with my work at a time when I need peace and concentration. *At times is is quite complicated to organise my thoughts, or perhaps even more the visual image. .... It makes matters more complicated that I forget thoughts and processes, or need time to revise because of all the interruptions*<sup>17</sup>. This part of the process takes a lot more time than I calculated, in fact it takes more than two months. In other words; a severe miscalculation on my part. At this point, I am far behind schedule, and this puts a lot of pressure on the remaining work.

I have predicted that the printing process would be shifting and time-consuming, but when I am under this much pressure, the slow progress is frustrating and stressful. To

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<sup>15</sup> 07.06 – 01, p.90

<sup>16</sup> 04.04 – 01, p.68

<sup>17</sup> 01.05 – 01, p.78

some extent I also fail to see how difficult it is to recreate the brilliant colours from the computer screen and sketches in the physical world, with textile print colours on canvas. Like I sum up in my diary in late May: *I had thought I could just print what I wanted, since everything was almost ready on the computer screen. That is not how it works*<sup>18</sup>. All along I have considered this part of the test printing as a fairly straightforward and simple, doing systematic attempts to reach a goal. Each and every little sample demands a lot of work, but that it is necessary to make so many is quite surprising. This also takes more time than I had planned.

Although I start accepting the reality of this process, my dependence on help with the printing adds to my stress, since my schedule depends on that of others, and therefore they need repeated change and adaptations.

Last, but not least, the amount of work I am facing, I have placed upon myself. I am the one with the demands, the one who says when I am satisfied, or satisfied enough, considering the circumstances. The basis of my work is a wish to if not to make perfection, than at least as close to perfection I can come. This is the driving force of my work! It means that I always need to keep moving, perhaps making something even better, and I need to find out. Up till a point, of course, but I make myself work extremely hard. Practically all available time is used, I do not stop until there is no material left to work with, and I *have* to stop.

But even now, when I face a rather calm period towards the end, I manage to create another stressful situation. Still, there is time to make improvements, and now I have time to make them! So even though external circumstances have played a certain role, me being pressed for time is mostly due to my own arrangements and choices. However, there are choices that feels more like necessities than real options, because they are based on an ambition of making the result as good as possible.

### **Affected by the Weather**

The sense of frustration and stress is obviously not a constant, there are things happening that make me excited and eager, but it does appear regularly in my log notes from this period. It affects both body and mind when it is at its strongest.

The focused, hard work at the printing table wears on my body, mind and soul. In my body, I have muscle and joint aches, and I need both workouts and therapy to keep going. I worry that it might not last till I am finished. I sleep badly. Being exhausted, under pressure and faced with the threatening cloud above my head make me dispirited and ambivalent to everything that happens, and it affects my motivation and willingness to go on. Sometimes, when the feeling of resistance becomes too strong, I bustle and become temporarily paralysed, other times struck by some sort of deterministic apathy and resignation.

How I evaluate the results, and my view on them, is also affected. In the most tiresome period right before the last summer vacation, I can barely look at the three first

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<sup>18</sup> 07.06 – 01, p.90

candidates for the exhibit, and my attitude towards them is quite negative. Soon, I will know if I have succeeded with my attempts, and I am probably both excited and a little nervous. At the same time, I am at this point more or less in a state of shock because of the letter from the tax authorities, which in practice makes it necessary to sell from the exhibit. The stakes are higher. It appears that the rejection is a way of protecting myself against a potential loss. This is a type of fatalism which follows exhaustedness and pessimism, and it tends to meet any trouble half-way.

The same mechanism comes into force in a different situation where I really feel the pressure, however differently; when the pieces are ready hung, and are about to be shown to the public: At first, I do not like the exhibit at all. After looking at it objectively, my head decides that I probably am content. But my mind is at zero, and is not interested in scary expectations, and by that be open to disappointment.

Rejection as protection seems to happen all by itself, and it is a method I use to some extent, when it feels necessary.

Being pressed for time is part of the stress. I strongly feel the lack of time, but I also know it is very real when it comes to my ambitions. I need to limit the test prints to a few possible techniques and materials. My original thoughts and ideas are rejected due to time concerns. More time could have led the process in different directions, not necessarily meaning more successful. Still, I think I can safely say that in addition to the physical and psychological effects, the time factor has had an impact as to what pieces are in the exhibit. What does this tell me? Could *I* have acted differently, done something that would have reduced the stress and frustration? Of course I could have chosen to focus on one exhibition, and dropped "Metamorphosis". That would have given me more time. However, it does seem like I am good at *creating* stressful situations, regardless of how much available time I have. It has to do with the amount of work I choose to fit into each situation. Of course I could have worked with more familiar challenges than my computer presented me with. That would have meant less frustration. On the other hand, I would have denied myself the new experiences, knowledge and ways of expression, which is very important for my motivation to work. My textiles would also have turned out very differently, pieces I am happy about and content with, despite everything, because they represent something new to me. All in all, my ambitions could have been lowered. But how does one limit ones ambitions? Is it possible to learn not biting off more than I can chew? To some extent, maybe.

Whether there really is anything to learn from this, I think it has to do with my way of working, or my work method.

## On Method

### Tour Planning and Strategy

What method am I talking about? All trips demands a certain amount of planning, a strategy on how to maximise the experience and outcome, and to make sure you safely reach your destination before it gets dark. Through my log I can find clear traces of *my* strategy, a system in the way I work, how I handle the time I have, and how I spend it.

I start by making work schedules. Before start, the trip is divided into laps. As soon as I know which ideas I want to work with, I know from experience roughly which processes I need to go through before I try to realise them. The schedule divides the coming work period into phases for these processes, with approximate divisions between them. Within the different stages, I make target plans for each week, more or less exact, depending on what type of work I am doing. The clearer I can view the future, the more detailed they become. In the last hectic months, I also make plans for each day, lists over tasks I need to finish each day.

The purpose of all these schedules is to control the time, and make the most of it. But there is also one other intention: To create space for creativity, spontaneity, coincidences, and surprises, for the uncontrollable in controlled forms. A space for planned surprises, so to speak.

What kind of space is this? It is in this creative space I like to be, it is here I satisfy my own curiosity, where I develop excitement and energy. In my log I say that surprising myself is a strong motivation for my work. Digging out pictures from the dark, images I did not know existed. In order to make these images reveal themselves to me physically when I work, I need structures which will allow that to happen. Because I do not know what I am looking for until I find it.

Looking back at this work process without scrutiny, it is possible to see a pattern in the way the search provides answers and results in activity. The creative search and production follow each other like uneven pearls on a string: I look for a theme, find one, and get to work with my camera. I search through the photos, examine them, and get the answers. Then I start making the tools I need: The screens. I try out the possibilities that lie in the screens, investigate, find, and start producing the pictures. I search for ways in which to finish, show and display them, get the answers, and I do it. In the beginning of each stage, I use quite a lot of time trying out and exploring the different paths I see through all the tangle. Then I decide on one direction at more or less set times. After getting an overview of the terrain in front of me, and packed the necessary equipment, all I have to do is start walking.

The work schedules creates the structure ensuring the maximum amount of time for the creative processes which I base my work on, within the limited time available to me. The fact that I regard them as essential to the result can be seen in how I set aside 18/25 of the time in the first and preliminary main schedule to open and investigating, or exploratory work. (However, everything did not go according to plan, my creativity fraction ended up on a mere 11/25.) Still, it appears that these generous time frames, and the almost blind insisting on using them all up also prevents me from stopping earlier, and do a serious evaluation of what I actually hold in my hands. "The creative space" could become an

obsession leading to indecisiveness and the postponing of important decisions. In the log it seems like I almost deliberately suppress everything preventing me from staying in this space.

This is most obvious when it comes to the work on the sketches in front of the computer. After only one week, I write in my log: *The cut-out with nine holes from the pasta spoon is very, very exciting when I work with transparent layers. It suddenly became something new and abstracted (It is circles again, it tends to end up with circles<sup>19</sup>)*. The last sigh was probably an indication as to what I expected would come out of the sketching process. At later assessments, these are the sketches I write the most excitedly and positively about, and in a perspective, my log tells me that these are the sketches I believed in the most all along. Still, I make no final decision until one month later. Why?

Obviously, I continue searching in the hope that I will find even better solutions. As a dedicated hiker, I simply need to find out what lies behind the next curve – and the next – and the one after that. When the process drives itself forward, one idea leads to ten new ones, you find yourself on a roll, and it can be difficult to break out of it. A similar thing occurs when I am almost trapped by the routine of the production phase, and I seem unable to quit. It is difficult to jump off a speeding train.

Or are the reasons of a less idealistic kind? Is it rather a touch of pedantry, forcing me to explore practically every possibility laying in my sketches? *Prefer to have a broad view of the area before I set limitations, I'd rather not leave any possibility untried<sup>20</sup>*, my log states. On the other hand, who knows what I might have found? It also says: *I sense I push all these problems [analysis] ahead of me. I think that is typically the way I work. I do not face the problems until I have to*. Is this a sign of a general unwillingness to make decisions, a form of intellectual laziness? Am I putting it off simply because I am indolent? It is comfortable to sit quietly in front of the computer in my own, warm living room, when the city is Bergen, and the month is February. (On the other hand, it is partly the warm living room that makes me restless and eventually forces me to move on.) Is it possibly a little immoral that the solution should come to me so quickly and easily? Perhaps there is some truth to all these intimations, however there is no answers in the log. But several examples from the log suggest that decision-making requires a certain ripening period since I change my view of the results over time. Still, the most obvious reason might just be that I am having fun, I want to keep having fun for as long as I can.

Because it is not only the thorough consequence analysis I postpone as long as I can, but also the work I dread. *I sense that everything in me has fought all this practical work involved with [making] the screens for a long time. I have never liked it, besides I lack the routine<sup>21</sup>*, I write. The night before 17 May I had a dream which perhaps can illustrate the relationship I had to this necessary practical bit of the work process: I am almost finished with the screens, the films have been returned to me, and I am ready to transfer them. In my dream I see some thrilling and wonderful artworks, apparently made by me, three different object groups, each - according to my own evaluation - great ideas used in a spacial and architectural setting. One of these groups is described like this: *Circle shapes in soft colours, ready to be printed directly to terracotta, and built into walls or*

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<sup>19</sup> 12.02 – 01, p.47

<sup>20</sup> 12.01 – 01, p.47

<sup>21</sup> 01.05 – 01, p.79

*similar, right away*<sup>22</sup>. In other words, a pipedream. The finished results printed directly in its own material, without having to make a single screen!

That my unwillingness to make decisions also robs me of the opportunity to reduce pressure due to time and stress, is clearly shown in the intensive and physically exhausting production phase. In my log, I write about picking the pieces for the exhibit: *( ) This because my ambition is to finish as many as 9 pieces. I originally thought 5, but then I have a few to choose between. I thought I had to see the finished results to be able to choose, I could not in the sketching phase because I had trouble picturing them*<sup>23</sup>. For some of the pieces, the last statement is true. But would the exhibit have turned out differently, or of lesser quality, if I had evaluated my material thoroughly, and made a choice earlier on? There is nothing to suggest that. The five pieces I eventually picked, were all finished before I went ahead with the two last ones, which ended up being rejected. The result is the same, but my unwillingness to make decisions gives me more work and stress. So, my work method in this connection, could be called inefficient, if my goal is to save time and reach my goal with the least possible amount of work.

When I test print, I also include this space for planned surprises, and sometimes I am pleasantly surprised. At the same time as I try to recreate the expression from the sketches, the exploratory search process in the textile material takes place, with different technical methods. *What opportunities lay in the tools in my hands ... combined with the ideas in my head?*<sup>24</sup> I ask in my log. Some of the attempts end up completely off trail, they turned out to be detours, at least on this particular trip. Others end up as pieces of art in an exhibit. Which ended up where was not a given. In a lot of the unused material, there are possibilities that can be developed and used in other connections, both when it comes to sketches, tests, and finished works. So if the purpose, as in my case, includes a wish to be surprised, satisfy my curiosity and the joy of discovering new things, the method is effective, and brings results.

My artistic work method is a prerequisite for the ways in which my ideas are created and developed. It takes care of my goals and motivations, makes things happen, moves the process ahead. Still, it does come with its pitfalls. There is not necessarily progress just because many things are going on. In fact, the same methods could prevent progress. The examples from my log tells me that in focused situations, it is wise to be aware of this, and add a touch of seriousness to the playing, by constantly and thoroughly evaluating the benefit. My own method is probably partly the reason why I am pressed for time, and also why I ended up being in such a stressful situation. Supposing more time equals less stress and frustration, I think a stronger awareness in this area would have brought me to the same result, only in a much more relaxed way.

## **Balancing**

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<sup>22</sup> 19.05 – 01, p.84

<sup>23</sup> 22.08 – 01, p.108

<sup>24</sup> 06.06 – 01, p.91

There is something self-contradictory in the term "planned surprises". When surprises are planned, there is a kind of control behind them. However, surprises are hard to control, that is their nature. I want to be surprised, but in controlled forms. I want to regulate the framework, the size of the space in which all these uncontrollable things will happen, where ideas will simply appear in my mind, and be developed, processed, and completed.

To be able to surprise yourself, you have to let go of the control, and dare to take chances. In the light of this, it is possible to regard the entire work process as a contradictory mix of the desire to control, and the willingness to take chances, to jump in both deep and shallow water.

What else do I do to gain control? I want to control time with my schedules. Acquiring new technical knowledge, all the efforts to know as much as possible about the processes I am entering into before I actually do; they are all attempts to gain control over my remedies. All the tests, all the thorough and detailed preparations for the printing process, are done to control the craftsmanlike implementation, and to make sure nothing goes wrong. *I really prepared myself to the printing, trying to have everything under control. I have made checklists and an action plan for each step and all the eventualities*<sup>25</sup>, my log states.

Not all attempts of control were successful. When I am about to start the work with the films and the screens, I have a strong feeling that I do not really have an overview of the process. For a while, I really do not have control, either, until I manage to find the equipment necessary for finishing the screens. Lacking control over the computer technology also causes me to keep losing control.

At the same time, I willingly enter into situations where I know I have no control. It is definitely taking a risk when I challenge myself to put together a good exhibition on the spot, without having planned the pieces for the room, or for each other. I take a risk when I choose to include a learning process in the exhibit project. And I also do it by picking ideas I do not know is feasible the way I want, and which I know will present a number of practical difficulties. A couple of times I am about to accept second-best solutions because the problems seem insolvable, but then they work themselves out.

I make a lot of plans, but I also follow my impulses. This spontaneity only rearranges my plans. The light-green piece in the exhibit is one result of a number of spontaneous actions. And the log is filled with statements like: *...I will take my chances. Most things work out in the end, The answer came along the way ( ... ) I usually expect that there will be a solution eventually,...., It is never as bad as one expects*<sup>26</sup>, all suggesting that smaller or bigger chances are being taken quite often.

And mostly things turn out well in the end, one way or another. Also, I probably do not take chances without some risk assessment, and a certain feeling about the outcome. A feeling based on routine and experience.

With routine comes security, which again leads to letting go of control. Like when I, towards the end, take my chances printing three pieces at the same time, I write in the log: *I hope I can do this without messing up the systems. I feel I know the process and routines fairly well, well enough to go ahead with it.* And more: *I notice I am becoming*

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<sup>25</sup> 26.06 – 01, p.99

<sup>26</sup> 21.03 – 01, p.65, 10.06 – 01, p.95 and 19.05 – 01, p.84

*more careless and indifferent, but also more certain. I think there is a connection*<sup>27</sup>. It would appear that my control need is based on insecurity, and that it is simply greater where I am most uncertain. The desire to control is also a wish to build a sense of security, which can present me with greater freedom to act. The sense of control gives a greater willingness to take risks. So, the artistic work becomes a balance between risk-taking, and trying to control the outcome to the greatest possible extent.

## **"It's in your body"**

My courage rises with the sense of security; safer means freer. Other examples from the log shows that experiences are useful when it comes to assessment: *Am surprised over how "right" the direct printing works turned out, compared to the computer sketches. I made a few decisions merely based on assumptions after the samples I had, I did not make samples based on the assumptions. This confirms that I am experienced enough to sometimes make the right evaluations*<sup>28</sup>.

Security follows knowledge and experience. And even though I have both in my field of expertise, important processes are new, unknown and unfamiliar nonetheless. In other words, I need even more of the same to be able to act more freely. This security is what I try to achieve by getting an overview, in different ways, over the field I am entering. When one work phase is ending, I can prepare the next by reading theory, and making inquiries, orally and written, to have more information. Or, I collect knowledge by making little tests in the areas I need to know more about. While I do this, I also become more experienced. The experience comes from working, when I *do* something.

When the screens are done, I need to *get to know* them, to use an expression from the log; how will the colour behave when it is printed through the screen? And how will my motive *feel*<sup>29</sup> on the different quality fabrics? Step by step I build confidence towards the colours, tools, and materials, the variables I can juggle around. What I called fumbling at the start of the finishing phase, when I did not know where to start, is in the same way collecting experiences. My different attempts to finish and mount the pieces, gives answers I later on use as a basis for my decisions.

Many of the work processes need to be done over and over, and become routine. When you do something repeatedly, you accumulate experiences in both intellectually and bodily know-how. You know in all probability what the result of an action will be, because you have done it several times already, and seen what happened. But not all knowledge is conscious. The experiences are also embedded in your body, or perhaps they exist at some dormant level of consciousness, and need to be triggered by the action itself in order to wake up?

Several places in my log I write about how this forgotten, or dormant know-how returns as an invisible hand, which slowly, but steadily leads me on in my work situation.

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<sup>27</sup> 22.08 – 01, p.107 and 108

<sup>28</sup> 03.09 – 01, p.113

<sup>29</sup> 07.06 – 01, p.90 and 27.05 – 01, p.86

While I do the initial test prints, I write: *There is no glow in the colours. I think I have to mix colours from the complimentary colours again. How can I forget something I have done so many times!!! All in all, there is a lot of things I have forgotten, but it does come back to me while I work with it (...) Suddenly, it is just there, what was blank when I started out*<sup>30</sup>. It would seem as if what "is in my body" can be trusted more than intellectual knowledge about things like mixing colours.

Much of the same happens when I, after the last summer vacation, which has broken the rhythm of the printing process, need time to get back into the complicated routines. I am about to stretch out a new piece of textile on the printing table, something that requires accuracy and regularity, and afterwards, I write: *I had already forgotten the steps in the stretching, and I felt unsure. I remembered nothing as I started out, but it came back to me while I was working*<sup>31</sup>. The body acts without the mind knowing what it is doing.

The conscious mind can forget, and apparently the body has got a better memory. In the end, the mind has to realise that it is impossible to keep everything under control, that the mind has its limitations, and that after a certain point, there is nothing left to do except trust your body, and let it take the plunge, take the chance.

## On Ideas.

### In the Air - Images and Other Thoughts

If experience is in the body, both conscious and dormant, is there something corresponding in the mind? Actions are stored as know-how, but what about what you see and think? These great ideas I am waiting for, where are they coming from, and how do I make them come? What really happens in this creative space, the space for planned surprises?

The first thoughts and images described in the log is one page 1. At this point, I picture textiles with a *raw, rough, and uneven* expression, words I explain further with the idea of the colours coming in *big, bold blots*. And I write: *These are old thoughts, sticking with me because it has been a long time since I worked in the studio*<sup>32</sup>. Unexploited possibilities becomes images I carry with me. Visions based on old experiences are stored in my head as part of the visual basis of my experiences, or what I would like to call the imaginary picture archive. From there, they can be extracted to enable my thought to have a starting point from where thoughts can spin.

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<sup>30</sup> 27.05 – 01, p.88

<sup>31</sup> 12.08 – 01, p.105

<sup>32</sup> Quotes on page 47 and 48: 30.11 – 99, p.1 and 2

This is the fall of 1999, two years before the exhibition opens, and I write applications hoping for financial support to my project. Therefore, I need a project, and I need to describe it. The first draft of the project description is based on these old ideas. Only shortly after this, I formulate myself differently, and I also include a part on digital photo processing. *After having sent the applications for funding, my ideas develop quickly,* I write. Thus, I am forced to make a sort of framework, and this triggers the thinking process. Suddenly the idea of "Kitchen Research" appears. It seems the boundaries have a liberating influence on my creativity. Having to formulate myself in writing intensifies my focus, and thus, the applications I write this fall affect the development of my ideas, or my theme.

The old ideas are there. But not even in the process where I develop ideas are the old experiences enough. So, I actively try to add images to my archive. I collect new experiences by looking at pictures in magazines, hoping to catch a glimpse of something visually or mentally stimulating, with regard to both ceramic and textile materials; a fragment of a vision which could possibly become something to pursue and trigger my mind.

New ideas take shape, but according to my log, they do not alter my original thoughts. Rather, they confirm that what I used to think interesting still is. However, things suggest that, subconsciously, new visions have slipped in. It is at this point the ball / circular shapes, and the whirly movements appear as descriptions of thought and mood imageries: celestial bodies, space, hair whirls, and similar things, *something with a sense of gyration*. And now, the idea of some very simple textiles constructed by geometrical patterns, described as *the extreme regularity of small variations*.

Whether or not the magazines are directly responsible for the new imagery, the log says nothing about. I look for "something", but I seem unable to find it. Still, it seems like the mere focus on the search clears the way of subconscious processes. I set myself to a frequency which enables me to receive signals. While my subconscious work, my consciousness seek validation in the familiar and safe, and suddenly the working title comes to me, plain and clear.

From the first, rough ideas to the kitchen sphere, I have been through a search, both active and passive, trying to find clues to follow. For reasons unknown, I have decided to continue working digitally with photography, and the solutions have revealed themselves to me, suddenly and without warning.

Or is the kitchen theme really that sudden? Although it is surprising, it is not merely my subconscious that is working. I also work actively and attentively to find a solution to very heartfelt, practical problem.

In this initial thinking phase of the idea process, my mind is on my solo exhibit as well as the "Metamorphosis" exhibit, and I search for both textile and ceramic clues. For "Metamorphosis", my idea is to make small, strange, ceramic objects resembling something they are not, which hopefully will make them interesting. These need to be made of perfect technical and craftsmanlike standard, and be linked, have a theme. But how can I avoid that my lack of ceramic skills is shown too much in the objects? Well, why not let something else show, like kitchen utensils. So, there I am in the familiar sphere of the kitchen, with all its strange artifacts and shapes. Here is imagery you can photograph and use as a point of

departure for textile surfaces too. The working title and the thematic become the solution to a ceramical problem, and the fact that I participate in the "Metamorphosis" exhibit, is therefore crucial for what I decide to work with in textiles.

I quickly decide to bring the same theme over to textiles since I already decided to work with photography as a starting point. This decision is also based on ceramic ideas. In my log I wonder how digital photo processing suddenly became a part of my project idea, I do not really know when that happened. In hindsight, it seems clear that some of the explanation can be found in the general focus on digital work methods; at the Academy, in the Dept of Textiles, and in society in general, and I want to follow the technological development within my own field. Neither is it difficult to understand the chain of thought behind this choice of work technique.

First, my log tells about three-dimensional and spacial imagery, a result of my focus on ceramic material. On my way to two-dimensional textile surfaces, the images of round celestial objects and the ever expanding space with its black holes, turn into circular, whirling motions. I start thinking photographs, two-dimensional, physical images of the circular motions, the underside view of bottles, of hair whirls, of navles. From this, the idea of processing these photographs digitally for screens is not far away.

The focus on the three-dimensional ceramic object does not only have an impact on my choice of motives, but also on the way in which I choose to work with them. Thinking about ideas left and forgotten does not only give me a desire to get back to my old tricks in textile printing, it also leaves marks which will appear later on in the process, and greatly influence the development of the finished works.

### **From the Kitchen to the Space for Planned Surprises**

The framework is done, I am in the kitchen. From looking around everywhere, I can now focus my search within the four walls of the kitchen. And again, new constraints triggers new ideas and thoughts. Because the kitchen is big. Ideas stop by, are examined, and then rejected. Others are invited in. Some ideas disappear by themselves, or are consciously peeled away as my thoughts take new directions. The roughly treated textiles from the first project descriptions are out of the picture. Now, it is the visual sphere of the kitchen I am interested in. Or more accurately – the prosaic utensils, hidden away in drawers and cupboards. However – it becomes clear that it really is the metallic shine, the surface and shape of some of them that interests me. In this way, I focus and limit the visual world I want to be in, and this makes it possible for me to start working. Because these objects are real, they are not merely images, but also physical objects. In other words, it is possible to expand the imaginary picture archive with a purely physical picture archive: Concrete photographs of the objects of interest, photographed so that the potential I see in them is kept.

It took me a few weeks to get there. Through loops and detours, my chain of thought has taken me to an area in which I can work; a theme, or a concrete point from where I can start working.

Even though the search area is narrowed down considerably, it is still too large. I need to investigate the theme visually, try it out in different directions before the idea is put in concrete form, and the pile of photos is big. Then the chosen idea needs to be processed, developed and refined, both as sketches and as textiles.

In these exploratory phases, it is up to the different variables I have decided to juggle around, to show me what they are good for when they are combined: First, it is the kitchen utensils, or rather the photographs of them, combined with the graphics editor, Photoshop. Later, the same procedure is repeated when the screens are combined with different printing techniques and fabrics – and everything is filtered through my eyes, with my perspective and opinions. What hidden opportunities can be found in my ideas? I have thoughts, but my vision is blurred. In the space for planned surprises, I want to reveal some secrets.

The activities are again combinations of control and spontaneity. To be able to be surprised, whatever new that comes out of the exploratory process will have to spring up "on its own". According to my own theory, I am therefore going to be the organiser and the facilitator, the one who performs the necessary actions to make new images come out of the old ones, without conscious control or censorship of what happens. But naturally, I control and censor all the time, both on a conscious and subconscious level. I pick out pictures, methods, decide which keys to push, I intuitively know which directions it is interesting to pursue, and which to forget. See what happens – evaluate – choose directions – look – assess – make a choice. (Or act, assess, and decide based on tests with the textile material.) I ask, get answers, and relate to those answers in a constant dialogue with the computer screen. And I actively search for "something". The log still tells of both positive and negative surprises along the way.

The sketching process is finished when I realise that I probably already have found what I am looking for. I leave the kitchen, and this "something" turns out to be "the abstracted holes", the sketches that result in the pieces at the "Displacements" exhibit, which actually surprise me. But in hindsight – as I read the log – it is easy to spot traces of what will be the end result of the two-year long process.

## **The Subconscious Imaginary Picture Archive**

After one year and a half, the circle bites its tail, and I have returned to page 1 in my log. There, I find the first clue: The descriptions of circles, whirling motions, geometrical patterns, and regularity with small variations. The words are intended for other imagery, but they might as well be about the result of the sketching process, or about the finished pieces. The early images are just a few among many others, I am conscious of them for a

short time, then I leave them, and they get lost along the way. Later on, my ideas take completely different directions. Still, the visions have been there, the thoughts have been in my mind, and in the end they materialise as "the abstracted holes".

Now, it is possible to object to this interpretation of the causal connections. I did quote myself earlier, saying *it tends to end up with that* [circles]. In other words, I have worked a lot with circles before, and therefore they might be an easy option. And whirling motions are created when you use the computer features I did. But I chose these special features, and the concurrence of words, and the look of the final sketches or works, is striking.

I found the next clue when I am, after my long hibernation (year of 2000), ready to start working on the exhibit, and take stock before I begin. I write in my log: *I think a lot in black / white [grey area scale] with elements of bright colours...*<sup>33</sup>. This is before I even started working on my visual material, a sketching process mostly in all colours, not just the grey tones. The ideas are forgotten, but there is no doubt quote describes the final exhibit very well.

Among these colours, or colour combinations, are those I describe as strange, those that surprise me when I look at the completed exhibition. *Strange colours, peculiar. Unplanned*, I write. Except for the two pieces in grey tones, the colour elements are dominated by bright yellow-green, bright red with orange, as well as a very light, almost white and subdued green. The light green piece hangs next to the bright red-orange, in the same room, and I like it. *The red and the light green mateches well next to each other, it is curious and uncommon. Actually, it is completely new to me*<sup>34</sup>, it continues.

The statement is only partly true. The orange colour might feel new against the light green, but my log tells me that the combination light green / bright red, has been on my mind for quite some time. *I always saw a strong colour red before my inner eye when I looked at the that piece [the light green] as something which was present without actually being there. Like Nick Cave lyrics. So perhaps "Snow / white" [an idea for a name]*<sup>35</sup>. On the same list over possible names, the red piece were titled "Sleeping / Beauty". Blood-red drops on white snow. However, I do not see the connection, and I am taken by surprise.

"The abstracted holes" was a conscious decision, after a long process, and careful considerations, and in my log I have listed several rational and convincing reasons for my choice. The pieces for the exhibition are also picked out and placed after the same thorough evaluations, and my determined will. Nonetheless, I have been influenced by other – or inner – forces.

Notions are forgotten, and disappear. But I have written them down in the log, and the examples I mentioned suggest that they still exist, that they are filed in my subconscious somewhere, lingering and affecting my judgement and the decisions I make. I have named this place my subconscious imaginary picture archive, and it is a storage for what I have seen, both with my outer and inner eye. In situations of choice, I recognise the images

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<sup>33</sup> 01.02 – 01, p.45

<sup>34</sup> 26.09 – 01, p.122 and 123

<sup>35</sup> 26.09 – 01, p.120

subconsciously. You look – and find visual expressions which gains resonance because they correspond with and confirm what you already "know", sense, and in many ways feel comfortable with.

The log helps me to see this phenomenon, which shows that the seemingly conscious decisions I make, those that make the exhibit what it is, are perhaps not so conscious after all. Without the log, I had probably not scented the up to two-year old clues, and not seen the connection between the beginning and the end.

But also other examples show that subconscious connections control the work process in certain directions, which could determine where it ends. In these cases, I become aware over what is happening, I know where I have stored the images I suddenly and surprisingly picture before me.

In my so-called space for planned surprises, I follow my impulses. Sometimes I follow them with excitement and incomprehensible stubbornness, like with "the yellow piece". I find myself in the very last phase, and I really consider myself done with the printing. Still, I initiate a final spurt, searching for "the right colour blue", a colour I just "knew" was needed in order to save the piece from a certain banishment. And I write: *I am not sure where I got the idea of printing blue circles inside the white ones, on the yellow. Suddenly it came to me. I may have pictured it, for some reason. So I must have seen something, which gave me the idea, but I do not know what it might have been*<sup>36</sup>.

Five days later, it dawns on me that the colours and image I search for already exist, as a well hidden and forgotten sketch print-out. *Peculiar. Suddenly I thought of something. What I am doing now, the black and blue inside the light yellow, reminds me of a computer sketch I liked, but thought of in connection with discharge ...*<sup>37</sup>. In the end, the piece ends up being almost a copy of this sketch.

Ideas that come to me from "nowhere", is actually still present both in the subconscious imaginary picture archive, and in the very much physical sketching archive. The source of the ideas is therefore identifiable.

In the same way it might be possible to at least find one of the reasons for the idea behind "the very light piece". In my log, it says: *I got some new ideas about colours. Something I saw made me think that I could make a completely light piece*<sup>38</sup>. This vision "reveals itself" on my way home from the studio on a bright night in May, after a long days work, and I continue to write: *I no longer remember why I wanted to try some very light samples. (...) Maybe it is subconscious, because I look at my pastel coloured ceramics every day.*<sup>39</sup> These very light ceramic objects are always within my line of vision when I work, and looking back, I think it is very probable that they might have had some influence.

A last example illustrates the same thing: I print pigment colour samples, and the expression takes a new, unplanned direction. I write about the new samples: *They really look a bit like the flower idea I was doing with the computer sketches. And the colours I*

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<sup>36</sup> 10.09 – 01, p.115/116

<sup>37</sup> 16.09 – 01, p.117

<sup>38</sup> 31.05 – 01, p.88

<sup>39</sup> 10.06 – 01, p.94

*use are suspiciously similar to those I worked with in ceramics ... .. and with the circle, I am back to Gaute's beadwork. I have made samples reminding me of that, even though the colours are completely different* <sup>40</sup>.

These beadworks represent a very different sort of connection, which also trigger ideas, and drives the process on: The connection that occurs when the familiar are viewed through "textile" glasses.

My eyes have glanced over the very abstracted pictures that my young son has made and put over his bed, several times a day for a couple of years, when I suddenly look at them in a new way. I like the immediateness of them, and the direct way in which they are constructed, and it strikes me that they could perfectly well form a playful and challenging starting point for the construction of textile pieces as well. Even though this idea is taking a completely different direction from what I intended, it feels important to pursue it. And it is stuck in the back of my mind for about six months, and I work on it in the sketching process, until I decide to go for "the abstracted holes".

The solution for "the yellow piece", and the vision of a "completely light piece" appears seemingly like a bolt from the blue, suddenly and without warning. However, it is possible to trace these revelations back to a likely source. Other good ideas come to me without there being any possible explanation for their origin. But much as with the two mentioned cases, they come to me when I least expect it, like on my way home on a bright spring night; in a homely, relaxed atmosphere, like with the embroideries; or while I work out and think about nothing in particular.

For a while I have wondered how I can finish the textiles pieces so that they seem like a unity, a completed textile object rather than a square plaque, without really finding a good way of doing that. In the middle of a stretching, I find an answer: ... *Suddenly I pictured a lining, where the transition from textile to nothing went from holes, or rather parts of holes.... in fact the overlaps can consist of holes. This requires me of course to print on felted wool, ...*<sup>41</sup> This requirement stops the idea from being put into life, it becomes one of the options I need to put aside in my constant battle towards time.

I get the idea while I am in off-mode, and my thoughts are on leave. But apparently, some are still set on work, and suddenly a connection has been made, between images, experience, knowledge, filed so deeply in my consciousness, that they are hardly recognisable. In fact, it seems as if my head is working practically non-stop, even though I relax or go to sleep. The dream of mine that solved all the practical problems with the screens, and basically made them superfluous, is a good example of how that worked.

The beadworks are also apparently important. But what chords they strike, what subconscious imaginary pictures they correspond with and connect to is well hidden in the archive.

In order to make unexpected creative connections possible, there have to be something to connect. In the same way as creative problem solving depends on solid knowledge base, I would think that new visual ideas or solutions are created, based on a corresponding imaginary picture archive. But the archive might also be a real, physical one.

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<sup>40</sup> 10.06 – 01, p.93

<sup>41</sup> 23.02 – 01, p.54

I repeatedly describe in my log how I make mental and physical clean-outs of my surroundings. Sketches I will not use, test material, anything disturbing the visual image around me is cleared away from my vision and consciousness. I tidy the room, then furnish it with visual stimulus, like inspiring pictures, a colour nuance, sketches I might use, other sketches which I cannot let go of, different textile qualities and interesting test, so that they are always available to my eye. *I think about how important it is to me to see things, be reminded of how they appear visually, and keep an image of them in my head. It is even better to keep them hanging / laying around, so that I not only keep them before my inner eye, but also the "outer". In this way it is easier to connect elements, put them together to a unit*<sup>42</sup>. In other words, connections and ideas are not just products of subconscious thought processes, but are also helped along by a consciously facilitating will. Or, which tidies the space for planned surprises.

With the ideas we have returned to where the path started, and this tour is over.

### **Back to Start**

So, did I find anything interesting? Did I, along the way, manage to close in on the answers to the questions I posed when I started out? In many ways, I believe I have. A lot of what I have written about what characterizes this work process, how I embark upon the artistic project, and about how ideas occur and are developed, are phenomena corresponding well with earlier experiences, and are therefore somewhat familiar to me. Never the less, patterns and connections have become clearer. And I have had some revelations.

First about what recognises the artistic work process:

From a bird's eye, the main traits are the vacuum and isolation in which it takes place, as well as the time pressure and stress that follows.

The consequences of long periods of isolation can be uncertainty and a little too much susceptibility when faced with the outside world. In the cases I describe, it concerns smaller episodes, but what happens to the result? Does isolation also affect the final outcome? Would a more open work process, in dialogue with others, change the end result?

The question is hypothetical, and difficult to answer. Isolation is not something I reflect over and choose. It just happens automatically, by something resembling necessity, because I, right from the start, focus so intently on the task at hand, and put all my concentration in it. From experience, I know I often do that.

If you look for possible, hidden connections, you could perceive this automatic tunnel building as the walls of the house for planned surprises. A safeguard against outside influence protecting the light romantic and knowingly naïve intentions I have, that the process should surprise me, that artistic expressions should "occur on their own", through me, but without any real influence from neither myself nor other people.

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<sup>42</sup> 14.03 – 01, p.61A

At the same time it remains an open question if this isolation, and the circling around in my own small house, could in fact be part of the reason why I in some ways easily find myself on familiar tracks. If you look at it like that, it is possible that isolation influenced the result.

Artists work with different approaches, and have different experiences in this area. I still believe that the intense focus and the near total surrendering to the artistic project is a destiny shared by many.

Time pressure and following stress reactions are familiar occurrences for all who work towards deadlines, and my reactions are in accordance with familiar, universal reactions. The stress and frustration are due to both external factors, over which I have no control, and the premises laid out by me. However, I add to the stress in the situation by trying to use time to the maximum. It would be fair to say that I need a certain level of stress in order to work well. Experience from earlier work tells me the same.

In controlled forms, stress can work positively, like something I use because it increases my capacity. Pushing oneself is quite normal in work situations where time is of essence, creating stress is also a way to push the process forward. The important thing is to find the borderline between positive and paralysing stress. I am dangerously close to this borderline in parts of this process. Even if I normally push myself quite hard, the stress I am feeling this time is a new experience to me, which I do not know from before.

Has it influenced the end result? The time limits and stress had probably the biggest impact on my mental and physical well-being. It is difficult to see any direct influence on the finished pieces, besides the sense of stress being connected to my own standards of capacity and ambition. This is of course not only applicable to artistic work. The time pressure comes from the time frame of the work period. Important decisions need to be made with regards to the ending point, possibilities decided against, and you could view the result as a function of the amount of available time.

More about approach strategies and methodology, how I move the process ahead.

It might seem obvious to regard the method of the artistic work process as a balance between the desire to control, and the will to take risks. This balance may be said to be the basic principle of all goal-oriented creative processes. Control is about security. It gives latitude, and through latitude, development. That security provides freedom is something most will agree on, even though not everyone use this freedom for creative development. It is still interesting to see how clearly the pattern is drawn throughout the log.

All the risks I take move the process ahead. I throw myself into the unknown, withdraw to view the result, and plunge in again, one step further everytime. In this way, the solutions are also a consequence of how much risk I am willing to take based on the knowledge I have of my field.

I have portrayed the way I deal with time and the art project as a structure, intended to secure progress and give the maximum amount of time to the creative processes within the timeframe. From big, open spaces with broad sniffing, searching, exploring and testing, the walls are narrowed to a funnel, decisions are made, and action / production follows, over

and over from ever smaller spaces, to the end of the process. In these spaces, the planned surprises are supposed to spring up and surprise me. The driving force of my approach is thus my curiosity, excitement, interest, joy of discovery; these underlying factors are the motivation for my work, which drives the process ahead, and are the reasons for there being a process at all.

Furthermore, I experienced that the same positive driving force comes with certain pitfalls, that it easily can affect the process negatively and hinder progress when it starts going in circles. It is clarifying, and a bit unsettling, to see how quickly I become comfortable in a situation, being a little too content where you are, and therefore be held back by the inability to make decisions, or trapped in routine.

Even though there can be variations in what degree the idea development and execution have been integrated or separate, I can still recognise the basic structure and the approach to the problem from previous, and comparable work processes. The wish of being some sort of *explorer* more than a *contriver*, my curiosity of new discoveries, and my wanting to show them to others are basically my reasons for working with art.

How representative such a planned structure is for other artistic work processes, I do not know. It will probably depend on the cause for the art work, the motivation behind it. Still, many will be able to recognise the basic characteristics of my work method. Diverging and converging mindsets are familiar terms in relation to creative problem solving processes.

And naturally: Strategy and motivation influence the result to a high degree.

On how ideas transpire and develop:

From the outside, my ideas are created and developed through an active and attentive search process. The main thing is peeling; trying and rejecting possibilities until you are left with one, or limiting the search area to an ever smaller space. In all these rooms, there is a set of chosen variables. It is when you link these, and juggle them around that you get new ideas, either as a result of visual tests and evaluations, or as sudden *responses* to more or less unclear questions. These responses are results of subconscious variables interfering, and causing other connections. In the same way, subconscious processes influence your decisions, and both indefinable opinions and seemingly rational reasoning are obviously affected by hidden forces.

The way my ideas are created and developed is connected to the approach method, and like that, its essence is my motivation for my work. I would like to think that the process also is familiar to artists with similar motivations. The active, conscious part reflects how I normally work with ideas, whether it is on the computer, or directly in the material. I find it surprising, however, to have it so clearly demonstrated how much subconscious processes influence decision-making, and how important forgotten, imaginary pictures are for the end result. What in the moment appears to be "exciting and interesting" is perhaps more a subconscious memory of something "familiar", which you feel comfortable with? Is this really one important reason for "liking" something?

So why did things turn out like they did?

It is impossible to give an all-out answer to that. The causal connections are far too complex and complicated. The answers can be found on different levels, in the big lines, and in the little details. The pieces materialised because of a series of small and big decisions, and on one level in the line of causes, many of these may be traced back to the background I have in my special field. On a detailed level, you could say that one of the pieces in the exhibit is the result of me following an impulse, and printed a grey overprint on a resist test.

Already, I have pointed out a few factors I consider important. That is why I find it a little sensational and a tad ironic that the single most important factor for the result, has been the detour, "Metamorphosis", especially considering my ambivalent attitude to participating in that exhibition.

"Metamorphosis" was first of all decisive for my choice of the kitchen sphere as theme and idea world, which again led me to the pasta spoon and the holes in it. So my partaking had a fundamental significance for basic idea and motive. Furthermore, it had a strong influence on choice of method and technique, first digital photo processing as a sketching method, then using textile print screens as a tool. Both of these decisions are important for the visual expression. As mentioned, my choice of digital work methods was also influenced by a desire to update myself in this area, and you could say that the result is partly influenced by a general digital focus in the learning environment I am in. In addition, the "Metamorphosis" exhibit also had an impact on the decisions being made about idea and expression through the forgotten visions it generated. On a more detailed level, the proximity of the completed, pastel coloured ceramic objects probably give me the idea of an "almost invisible" or "very light" work, which ends up being one of the exhibit pieces.

In that way, you could also respond that the five "Displacements" are results of a pure coincidence, or perhaps say that they are the outcome of a lacking knowledge of clay? One clear conclusion to be reached is that the ideas came because I needed to relate to a different and unfamiliar material, and my thoughts went into new and unexplored territory. When I moved out of my ordinary thought circles, that is.

Vague patterns have become clearer, and hidden connections have been revealed. In that way, I have gained insight into my own work process. I have seen more vividly how I react in different situations, and in some fields, I can learn from that. No process are the same, but from now on I can hope it will be easier to recognise a situation, and to see what happens, both bad and good, when I am in the middle of it, not just afterwards.

And finally: It is rather surprising that I could be surprised over being surprised when I looked at "Displacement" at the opening!



# The Log

## The Writing

### Developing a Methodical Structure

The beginning – the first part of the log

I started writing the log in the fall of 1999. This is the situation: I know I am going to work on two fairly different exhibits for the next two years. The focus on researching ones own practice in the teaching envireonment I am part of, has given me the idea to become more aware on *my own* practice through observing it and writing a log. That the log could later be used as a basis for research and development work (R&D) is just a vague idea at this point. I let the thought mature, and the result is an application for funds for a project based on log notes, which I recieve in the summer of 2000. The notes follow my work for the solo exhibit.

The 18 months leading up to the turn of the year 2000 / 2001, my log notes are marked by the abovementioned situation. For the first six months I am not sure what I will use the notes for. The next six months, I still have not had any response to my R&D application, thus I do not know *if* I will use them. This spring, and following fall, I am also busy with teaching, and the artistic work process is hibernating.

The first notes from 1999 are not even dated, and I only write five little lines in three weeks. Then I skip two weeks, and after that follows a *one* page summary of the next week. I relatively quickly move away from this arbitrariness. I keep a piece of paper close by, where I almost daily dot down keywords helping me to remember what has happened, what I have been doing, and what I have been thinking. With uneven intervals, I type everything in my computer log.

As I type, I also include thoughts and opinions regarding the events, what has been going on inside my head, ideas, factual evaluations and considerations. In the beginning,

the log consists mostly of short and concise summaries and commentaries. In the spring of 2000, the summaries describe one week at a time. This first year, the log is clearly focused on the artistic: My work process.



Midway through – a turning point

In October and November I take an introductory seminar in research methodology at the Swedish School of Textiles at the University College of Borås. The seminar is held for new master students, and deals with research on yourself and your practice, in this case your own artistic development. Among other things in the seminar, I work on a project which is an exercise in observing your own work process through log writing, followed by an analysis of this process. The exercise presents me with some issues I have avoided confronting so far, and it works as an awakening for my log later on.

What issues becomes clearer?

First, regarding the content:

What is it important to write about? Is it only relevant to mention what is directly concerned with the artistic work process, or is it important to document all distinct events in the project period? What about other artistic work? And what role plays your personal life, meaning what goes on outside work hours, your leisure time? Is it even possible to separate work from leisure in an artistic work process? Or is it right / important to focus on a few, defined areas during the writing, and then pursue them?

What about everything not written down? Mere thoughts, moments passing, sensations which stay in the subconscious, and therefore disappear, thoughts deemed unimportant, or seemingly trivial events? What are their significance?

Does the log describe a *normal* work process, in the sense ordinary, usual or "natural" to me, if it in itself becomes a vital part of the process? And how do you keep the view of yourself open and impartial?

Then, the structure:

How do you structure the log so that it conserves the open view to the best extent possible, and secure a broad and relevant material? How do I make it relevant to myself in the work process, and in addition steady, methodical and objectively? And – how do I make it accessible, easy to read, and find information in later?

I start out being as generous as I can when it comes to content. I want to document as many as possible of the ingredients that make out the artistic work process: Besides, the research questions are posed in an open fashion and they indicate an open approach. Therefore I do not want to guide the content by limiting the arenas or focusing on certain areas, but include work in other fields, and not consciously leave out events from my personal life or leisure time, if they have been an important part of my day. Basically, I want to try and takes notes of what I do, and what I think about it, throughout the work period, until the exhibit opens. I think it is unlikely that the events not related to art will take up much space. Naturally, my main focus will be on the work process. Still, I think it is important to register them, since I cannot tell in advance whether or not they will influence the process.

*Everything* will obviously not be registeres. Many small, seemingly unimportant episodes will disappear without there being anything you can or will do about it. Experience tells me that some thoughts or sensations still might reappear, and become visible just because of that. Does that mean that the forgotten ones are insignificant?

Essential, routine tasks, the day-to-day family life, and other anonymous occurrences are probably not going to be written down either, other than by chance.

Whether or not this work process will be *normal* when keeping the log becomes this important is not something I need to answer yet. It is still important to structure the writing so that it interferes as little as possible with my artistic work and my stressed out mind.

The end – the second half of the log  
1 February to 27 September 2001.

This last part of the log includes the focused work leading up to the solo exhibit, the main object for this research. From here on in, I write structured and methodically, and the amount of information takes on a different and larger dimension.

Structure:

- I make daily notes. A piece of paper works as a memo. I take it with me wherever I go, and it is always available. Here, I write down actions, events, observations, thoughts, and assessments straight after they are made, happened or appeared – not merely as complete sentences, but also as a mix of full and half sentences, commentaries, and keywords, which together should give enough information to the further usage. These memos become a kind of field notes.
- Regularly, once or twice a week, I collect the field notes and type them into my computer, in my log. As I type, I comment upon the same occurrences, etc, and give more information, with a few days' perspective. The log is divided by week number, and everyday has its own chapter. Each entry is dated.
- These slightly retrospective commentaries, the views representing some sort of first reflection level, is from this point clearly separated from the actual goings-on: Actions, events, soberly registered observations and thoughts in passing. Physically I separate them by giving them different fonts. The two groups of data forms the basis of my raw material, and I start calling them "Facts" and "Day to Day Reflections", what I soundly observe taking place, and my thoughts about what happens. After each month, I make a summary and evaluation of the passed month. This monthly reflection contains a summary of that months "Facts", and more general comments and views on them, what I actually did, and how I regard it. Possible good points and interesting phenomenon are highlighted so they are not forgotten.
- In order to secure the documentation of all stages in the work process, I start doing what I call a "Three-day detailed log". These three-day periods (always Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday), the log notes are particularly elaborate and detailed. "Facts" and daily reflections are written down straight away. I type in the field notes in my log the same night, or the night after. The three days ends with a summary and a reflection over the work process in this phase, what it is recognised by, and why it turned out like that – a "Working Phase Reflection". This happens once a month. The three-day periods represent the five different phases I have divided my work process into.

## Refleksjon over arbeidsprosessen i februar:

Freitag 1. 03 – 2001

De to første ukene i februar beskriver en intens fase med oppstart på og utvikling av en ide. Fra en mengde løse tanker, gamle utkast og ingenting, skaper du prosessen og tar til slutt mermet overhånd. Jeg står ned, når v. ordene i blinde, uten eldre store bekymringer om hvor det hører hen. Reservasjonene er imidlertid hoder en gang i blant, men dukkes fort under igjen. Det er jo også nå arbeidsmåte, dette, ikke å være sensensiv, i alle fall i starten av en prosess. Problemet oppstår når en til slutt ikke kan gå glipp av en eneste mulighet.

Ibunden ting skal løses praktisk er også skjøvet til side. For det må være slik. For når sluttet irritert på mine eller hvert manglende / glemte kunststykke om Photoshoper. Ser at det finnes andre muligheter der som jeg kunne tenke meg å prøve ut. Nå etter en ukers arbeid i prosessen, ser jeg at det kanskje er like greit. Det begynner å bli på tide å avslutte denne delen av arbeidet, ta noen valg og stene dem ut i livet. (Barett fra at det bare er noen få uker jeg nå finner ut av fremt.) Jeg har materiale å jobbe ut fra, nok til å sette i gang.

Proessen går fra optimisme til pessimisme til optimisme igjen. Med svingninger innenfor disse bøkene også.

Kun ett av utkastene jeg var positiv til helt i begynnelsen hanger fortsatt med, og som jeg var misfornøyd med i en "down" periode ble senere opphøyet til interessant. Vurderingene forandrer seg m.a.o. over tid.

Med skiftene av innholdet er det mest forberet, men noe står igjen som spennende. Det viser at det er gjort en del valg underveis, selv om noen står igjen å ta. Vurderingene blir alltid gjort kontinuerlig: "ja" – "nei" – "ja" – "nei" – "ja" – "nei" – "ja" – "nei" (Og kanskje mer igjen.)

Idem jeg jobber og vurderer, har jeg hele tiden fullstendig i stillingsforsett. Den er ned på å ta beslutningene. (Lynprinsippet og, og praktiske hensyn.) Ser at bildet er blitt annerledes inn, det begynner å ligge på noe. Skilten på de nye utkastene virner seg.

Neste uke starter jeg med en rask oppsummering og bestemmer hva som må gjøres for jeg starter den praktiske delen av arbeidet. (Som selvfølgelig ikke bare er praktisk.)

En nærværende fenomen:

At en veldig god ide dukket opp i hodet mitt mens jeg lå på en bank og tenkte, uten "en tanke" i hodet, eller heller en mengde løse tanker i hodet. (Jeg har forsøkt å klippe i den alle jeg har, det gikk helt fint.)

At en gammel, nærværende skisse jeg plutselig fant, svarer på de grader med tanker og frister jeg har i hoder mitt nå. Det er muligens viktig å følge slike lyster, de har tydeligvis vært der en stund. Det er derfor jeg bare må prøve ut noen ting til først.

57

Nest siste februar - ikke var jeg på skolen 3 dager. FOJ saker - kollegiemøte.

Siste februar - ikke har jeg holdt på med årsregnskap og selvsagtviselse... i denne skrivinge.

I konstante dager med prosjektarbeid fikk jeg altså denne måneden.

Jeg har laget en 1-års timeplan for arbeidet med datoer for når de, og det tui viene k art. Den har fulget om jeg skal komme i havn. For det blir veldig knapt med tid likevel. Følge den planen må skissearbeidet være ferdig om to uker, i midten av april. Det er nok i selvsagt laget, men du må bli være klar!

Skrivedel 2 timer.

"Monthly reflection" – idea phase

Duvel 6.06 - 2001  
Lørd 29.00 - 1.15

1.06

1.06

1.06

1.06

1.06

**Fredag:** Start kl. 9.45. Sjekket loko. Trenger å få betalt regninger. Diap. kr. 7,47.  
 Handlet mer White Spirit og mat på kassakontor. Det lur gikk hardt på kreditten nå, etter at jeg fikk sagt om penger.  
 I.S.P: Fikk hjelp av Steinar og råklet en reserveomgang med lulleannen. dessuten trykte jeg pastellfarger med den lille hull - maskinen. Ser at hvit - på hvit - reserver vil bli litt hvit på lyst og. Må jobbe mer med dette.  
 Vasket ut 2. prøveomgang. Og trykte lulleannen en gang til. Reserven må tørke inn i mellom trykkene. Det går fint når vi er to. Lunsj. 12.30.  
 Kjerte til skolen for å hente litt leret til prøver, det er tomt hos meg. I kuller og 4 ny sifre. For vi trevnen min er utslitt og stoppet å fungere.  
 Vurderte den nyvaskede prøven og så at jeg måtte revurdere de oppsatte oppskriftene mine i forhold til neste prøveeksamen.  
*Nye ideer strømmer på hele tiden: som: nesten usynlige striker på lysse flater. et nesten hvitt, lyst grønt, gult, grått... svart, hvitt og gråskala. Må sende opp og finne ut av ting, men først er det flere ting jeg vil finne ut av, litt mer av de medele... eller lite etter innfallsmotoren. Urtike småigheter ligger i vorkonen jeg har i midten hendene ... i håndinnsavn med forestillinger jeg har i hodet!*  
 Spente opp nytt prøvestoff og la vannglass på liter. prøve.  
 I hjem kl. 19.00.

1.06

1.06

**Lørdag:** kl. 13.15: Vasku ut liten prøve og lugde nye prøveoppsett. Blandet farger og råklet over reserven, svart, grå og to lys. (Må ha trykket mange flere reserveomganger i går enn jeg har skrevet opp her, ettersom jeg var forsløtt til overraskning i dag!) *Ders grå ser veldig fin ut. Den ble kjedelig urvasket, for den må det alle nyansene.* Et innfall gjorde at jeg trykket svart-hull over reserven her og der, noen grå og rosa ny... men en urrliten forsøking for å få en liten kontrast i kontrast til alt det lyse, her og der. *Ser spennende ut. Gleder meg til å prøve ut denne.*  
 I hjem kl. 18.50.

1.06

**Søndag:** kl. 13.15: Vasket ut reserveprøve til kl. 15.10. *Nåe ble bra, men utbrukt kort. De små reserveopp ble utbrukt men sparsomme. Fikk best til å gå i gang med et stort arbeide med en gang. Liva gjorde det bra! Renheten, klarheten, enkelheten spenningen i fargene, "påstaeligheten".*  
*Andre prøver, som av den mest imponerende, var interessante ut fordi de var røde og udefinerbare. Er ikke helt i stand til å se dem for meg i stort, derfor pårter de usynligheten. Kanne kanskje fullt opp til 6 arbeider ut av denne prøven, det kan vel kalles en vellykket prøve. I vasku for å gå videre med reserve, er det dessverre (?) andre ting det må finnes ut av. Denne gangen vil jeg forsøke å finne gråttmer i direkte - tekk som gir et bilde som svart - hvit - abstrakte møn. Finne riktig gråttmer og lyshet / mørkhet. Skal ha en - sammen med mer, for eksempel? I hjem kl. 19.15.*

1.06

1.06

70. Prøverne:

Type prøver:	Direkte tryk	Ulike tekniske oppsett
	Klart / svart	Reserve
	Sv / Hv	Pigment
	Lasere, nye fargekvaliteter	
	Temperatur, trykknivå	Alle de tekniske detaljene

Notes from the sampling / test printing phase.

I keep the structure and follow it down to the last period, even though my memo has become such an integrated part of the work process that the regular field notes the last months are equally detailed and elaborate as during the three-day periods. In addition to the log notes with more or less detailed facts, and day-to-day reflections, the log will consist of monthly reflections and summaries, as well as work phase reflections and summaries. The

same notes will therefore be assessed from different angles and time perspectives: Right then and there, as I type, two different monthly perspectives, and also when I write. Hopefully, this will improve the critical view by having a both immediate and distant relations to the same data.

### **The Structure in Practice**

All the note-taking, the typing, the reflections is work to be done, and it should be done in a way that least disturbs the artistic work.

Taking notes is easiest, and it soon becomes a habit. The amount of notes vary with the activities I am doing. Evaluations and decision-making often creates a lot of material, while it is less in phases with actual physical work or repetative actions. Also, I take more notes when I stay put, than when I move from place to place. Then I have a piece of paper ready and available, and it is easy to scribble down a few words in passing, more or less parallelly with the artistic work.

In the first period, I do not regard the more time-consuming log work as a liability. I often do the typing, use half an hour every time, and I am always up to date. I do the typing at night, after all other tasks are completed. The "Reflections" I do successively, and it usually takes me a couple of hours. On average I type in the entries on the computer every three days for the first three months of 2001.

As I experience frequent disruptions in my work rhythm, and the strongly felt lack of time stresses me more and more, the log obligations becomes one extra stress factor. It gets harder and harder to consentrate on the writing, making time for it. I struggle to gather the energy to do the log. Often, I write in the middle of the night, after already long work hours, and I keep falling behind. I write almost as often as earlier, but each time takes me longer. It has to stop.

Before summer vacation, I decide to include two changes in my writing routine: I am going to collect notes from longer periods before I type them, and I want to clear time for writing during the day. The changes involve considerably longer writing spells, but they do turn out to be effective. Things calm down, and after the vacation, the log work is more like a natural part of the artistic process than a disturbing element.

# The Reading

## Fumbling Towards an Approach

All the writing results in a log of 127 A-4 pages.

To get a better overview of the two-year long period the log describes, find out what it consisted of, and also becoming aware of what I really have been writing about, I start the reading by dividing the period into areas and topics, and I give them colour codes. "Other Artistic Work" is marked with purple, text concerned with "BNAA / teaching" is green, anything related to "Leisure" is marked yellow in the margin, and so on. The artistic work process is also divided into topics or activities: "Idea", "Practical Work", "Thoughts Concerning the Process", "Fascilitating", "Factual Assessments", "Applications for Funds", etc, 25 colours all in all.

Then I read – and re-read. At the same time, I write keywords in the margin, comments of the text, underlining possible points, or taking notes on phenomenon I find interesting.

When I started, my questions were bigger, more open, then they were narrowed down. For instance, I posed a question about what different ingredients an artistic work process could consist of. The idea was to reflect on these questions based on a short and explanatory summary of what I had been doing. I realised quite quickly that a more thorough description of the artistic work process would not only help make these ingredients visible, and make it easier to refer to the process later on. Also, it could be interesting to read on its own. So I start studying the log focused on the chronological story of the artistic process.

I divide the log into the different work phases, which later becomes the chapter division, and read as well as write with both general lines and little details in mind. In this story, the focus is on the artistic work towards the exhibit. Extra activities, like the finishing work in connection to "Metamorphosis", consultant work, teaching, more peripheral administration of my own activities and leisure activities are more or less cut out of the story. Apparently they are of little importance to the artistic development, and will only interrupt the drive of the story. Gone is also the fact that I spend part of my time writing the log, documenting the process by trying to remember, and photographing the different stages.

*This* work process, on the other hand, I try to make as complete as possible, by weaving in as many of the little ingredients it consists of, like the log describes them. Still the *story* around it becomes unavoidably more concentrated, tight, and straight-forward than how the process is described in the log.

The work process is described. Now, it is going to be analysed, *viewed* from a distance. Could the log tell me something I did not already know, could it too surprise me? What

does it say about the topics and questions I was interested in knowing more about? And how do I approach it?

Some topics have already proved to be important: Idea, method, and characteristics. Every topic area is now further divided into narrower and clearer questions, and I add more: Where do ideas come from, and how are they developed? What *is* my work method? What moved the process ahead? What stops the process from going forward? What affects the development and result, and why did things turn out the way they did? Where are the turning points, what important decisions are taken? What characterises the different phases? What activities do they consist of, what situations occur, what reflections, decisions and actions are made? I also add the point "Interesting phenomenon", based on occurrences that have surprised me, or appeared to be of essence during the reading, and therefore made me put exclamation points or stars in the margin.

With the questions and added points, I start my hunt. Every work phase is searched for paragraphs addressing the different topics, or imply answers. The findings are registered and catalogued, each with its own headline. I also reflect more on the individual findings. What can I read from them? All these notes add up to some sort of extract of the log, and become the basis for the written work in "Reflection".

It soon turns out that many of the answers are weaved into each other. It is difficult to maintain interest in some of them. What excites *me*, is mainly found under the headline "Interesting Phenomenon". Here are the peculiarities, the recognitions, the revelations – and the surprises. Most of these phenomenon are related to my preliminary main themes, and the preliminary therefore becomes the permanent.

### **The Log as a Source and Basis for Reflection**

In practice, writing the log became easier after a while. It took time, but little by little, I managed more or less to eliminate the log as a disrupting element. How did it work as a practical tool during the reading?

Even though the methodical structure I eventually picked may seem rigid, it was probably necessary to make the writing routine. The routine kept me writing, and so it secured continuity, and a wide range of material.

While reading, I found it easy to navigate through the log, just as I had hoped. The different fonts, separating actions from reflections, gave variants of information, and made it easier to go straight to what I sought at any given time. The same applies to the colour codes I implemented afterwards. The different colours made it very easy to find a particular topic or section. Another important factor was the dating of each entry, since it sometimes was significant to know what had happened between and act, or thought, and the actual typing. I also benefited from the monthly summaries and reflections, and likewise from the different work phases. Many of the topics I have addressed and discussed was first mentioned there. These reflections represent the first stage in the work with this story.

Torsdag:

USL: 9.45. Puh. Mye slitarbeid igjen. Det samme igjen og igjen. *Er litt lei denne ensformige taden, men det er bare å bite sammen sammen. Denne ska og neste så er forklarendevis det verste over. Det har det være.*  
 Trykket 5 bunn og raster på alk. Trykket hele bordet samtidig i de to rasteromningene: to omganger fram i stedet for åtte. (Samme farge på de grå og det røde.) Utrolig tidsbesparende, men også nervepirrende. Sulle litt på det røde, fingrene mine igjen, men håper fingen er såpass lys at det det ikke syns noe særlig. *Måker jeg begynner å bli mer skjodet og lågrydig, men også mer sikker. Det henger vel sammen. Turlig med dette 16.30. Mildlig.*  
 Trykket overtrykk på det røde. *Stakk ikke begge, det tok lengre tid å måle ut overtrykkene, skjære ut de som mangler i ikke få plassert dem og ta på for hvor de forskjellige skulle plasseres, som jeg trodde. Denne planen var riktignok opparbeidet.*  
 Det er utrolig forskjellige mål på de forskjellige forskyningene og likt innenfor hver enkelt.  
 Er nå utmattet og gir hjem kl. 21.30. = 12t (uslett)

*Stakk 5 bunn*

*Replikert*

*angst*  
*senlig*  
*alt*  
*skjodet*

**Oppsummering av de tre dagene:**

Tre dager preget av systematisk produksjon med lite rom for tankarbeid. Oppspenning, tråddet. Oppstilling og pussmerker / tråder. Trykking med fullramme, mellomramm, bunn og raster. (to trykk, forskyving av systemene, så to trykk til. Værling innimellom.) Oppmåling av mellomrommene, tilknytning av sjåklonger, overtrykk med liten fullramme. Av merstoffet, vaske bordet, sprute opp andre siden av stoffet og gjøre det samme en gang til.

Er blitt siknere og mer rutinert og tør derfor på kos på tre arbeider samtidig, noe som rasjonaliserer arbeidsprosessen og virker tidsbesparende. (Brukte like mange dager på å trykke ett arbeid som jeg nå bruker på tre, ... to av dem like i fargene.)

Det er interessant å merke seg at en blir mer modig og uansinnant dess tryggere en løter seg på bakgrunn av rutine og erfaring. Selvfølgelig kanskje, men likevel. Kanner pir trygghet og frihet.

Dagene er tomme like og jeg vet utvisselt hva som skal gjennomføres fra dag til dag. Det gjentakende og rutinemessige er kjedelig, men en gir seg tid til å tenke over det. ... så det er best å bare holde på men stans. Likevel begynner jeg å bli sliten og lei av ensformigheten. Det henger selvsagt også sammen med at jeg jobber altfor mye, at dagene er altfor lange og at jeg ikke tar meg fri i helgene engang.

Ikke fordi jeg har ambisjoner om å få ferdig hele 9 arbeider. Utgangspunktet var 5, men så får jeg noen å velge mellom. Syns jeg måtte se dem ferdige for å kunne velge, igrunde det ikke på akisastadiet fordi jeg ikke helt så dem for meg. Trenger noen ekstra til Vistingsvannet også.

Så planene mine er stramme. De revideres når noe uforutsatt inntrer, eller når jeg merker at jeg har tatt feil av tiden arbeidsprosessene tar. Den hittil siste har jeg holdt meg til lenge, den fungerer men innebærer hard jobbing. Det er bare slik at det og det må gjennomføres du og da for at jeg skal bli ferdig. Dessuten er jeg avhengig av Steinar og skylder han en litt ryddig oversikt over når han må være tilstede. Han har vært til uventet hjelp.

Tenker framover på avslutningsmåter innimellom.

*refleksjon*

*infiltre*  
*formasjon*  
*st*  
*all som*  
*slut*  
*tenker på*  
*st*

*høytal*  
*tidlig*  
*Reaktor*

*Enslighet*  
*den*  
*gjennomfør*  
*over*  
*uinter*

*ambisjoner*  
*du 5, tid*  
*5*

*Stortings*  
*utvalgte*  
*tenker på*

"Work phase reflection" – production phase.

Onsdag 26. 09 - 2001

- Tilke 38:** **Mandag:** 14.00. Starter med å ordnet pakke til Osløreisen, rydde Ervelbordet for papir og oppgaver. Sendte ut noen invitasjoner. Planlagt ting fra USA. Tenkte på navn. Ordspill som "snow / white" ... "sno / hvit" (det lysse grønne). "tome / rose" (det røde), ellers annet som har med farger å gjøre; "Little green", "A touch of grey", "Yellow snow" (Hittil) Disse siste er sangtekster. *OK å få navnlik inn i det hele.* Billeduttrykket i arbeidene har jo ganske mye med rytme, forløp, indrasjon og andre muskuliske virkemidler å gjøre. *Ervis har sikkert muskuliske som jeg har ikke i. Vurderer navn på tegnet og. Noen navn/tegn gjør seg best på engelsk, andre på norsk. Må veige det ene eller det andre, helst norsk.*
- Til forslag til alle, nå:
- "Fortinløse". (A) Et ikke helt godt ord. Bedre på Engelsk: "Connection" Litt for ledende?
  - "Rotasjon". (45gr.) Liker det. Beskrivende og noksamt, dik som arbeidene.
  - "Snø/hvit". (Vilje) Ikke så dumt, liket ordene og ordspillet, men kanskje litt for fêtsed.
  - "Torne/rose". (To ned) Semantisk.
  - "Little green". (To ned) Ikke helt godt, blir ikke noe ting, er bare et navn. Blir "lille grønne" på norsk. Enda verre.
  - "A touch of blue". (En ned) All right på Engelsk, der touch betegner fingeravtrykk også. "En smule blå" mistar denne tyngden og navnet blir utestregende og tomt.
- Tirsdag:** Pakket ut arbeidene og begynte vurderingen av hvor de skulle henge. Fram og tilbake. Prøvetmonterte og tok ned igjen. Rammene var omhyggelig siden 1990. Jeg har altså forholdt meg til en foretatt og feil modell og måtte tenke om igjen. Det var ikke enkelt å finne ut av det. Den ulike høyden er vanskelig, dessuten må alle ha rom rundt seg, henge i fred for de andre. Fargene er heller ikke enkle å ha med å gjøre, de er ikke designet for å stå til hverandre, og hver enkelt farge er temmelig sær. Her er de grå enklere. Prøvde først "Rotasjon" på den lille veggen inn mot Lunteret som planlagt. *Det ble ikke bra. Veggen er bare akkurat stor nok, det gjorde et snust og rotete inntrykk, en ser for mye av opphenger bak etc.* Ned igjen. "Connection" hang fint på endevæggen, og der ble den hengende. "Snø/hvit" fikk bli værende på den lengste kordveggen rett mot "Connection", selv om jeg vurderer andre løsninger også. *Bl.a. tenkte jeg er ønskelig på å la det røde, sterke men lille tegnet der, men et annet fargevalg i motsatt ende, men da det rødt fra meg.* De to som ble værende fargene fint mot hverandre i rummet, og lengden på det ene begrenset mulighetene. Det andre grå

Notes from the last phase.

In order to make the log function as a natural part of *my* artistic process, it became necessary to make a routine of it; automate the writing so to speak. This to prevent it from interfering with my thoughts, and enable me to focus on the artistic work. So, it became necessary to limit the focus on the log, keep a distance to it, and not spend too much time thinking about what I had written. Therefore, the notes have a immediate, direct, and

uncensored character, without conscious agendas or guidelines for the content, and thereby the result. There is always a chance that log notes are designed for a desired result. (Sometimes I could, for instance, have liked a few more really striking statements to quote.) The risk is that with such an uncritical attitude to what is written, the quality of the material will not be as good as it perhaps could have been. If I had focused more on the log, I might have had a more plentiful and thorough material. But that would have made the *artistic* work process less normal. It is likely that an approach with clearly defined and limited areas would have given a more elaborate discussion of these topics, even though the overall picture would have been lost.

And despite the fact that the log ended up being a natural part of the work process, it was still not a completely *natural*, or *ordinary* work process for me. It is imaginable that the frequent reflections over it may have raised my awareness, and by that affected later actions and decisions, even though that is not stated in the log. Somewhere in the log, I also imply that the writing increases my work efforts. At times it was rather disturbing, and the self-imposed writing did clearly contribute to the stress reactions and frustrations. The same thing could be said of the entire R&D project. Knowing what was waiting, put this artistic work process inside a framework, both *unusual* and *extraordinary* as opposed to earlier processes. On the other hand, it is not *extraordinary* to write some sort of log, at the same time as being involved in an artistic work process.

I decided to include events from all arenas in the log: My personal life, leisure time, other work engagements, and so on. Afterwards, it appeared that these events – as expected, and with the exception of the work with "Metamorphosis" – were rather in the background of the log. Mostly, they turn up as objective registrations of *what* I did. The everyday and routine events are at their most visible in the phases with the three-day detailed entries, but even here they appear as nothing more than short accounts. Occurances from my spare time are only ever described in detail when they are very evident, and directly affects my work. The more distant events that took place parallelly with the artistic work have really no place in this story. But even though the log contains little personal information, which is a natural effect of me lacing one, the work process still intervenes with my private life – and vice versa. Since my mind does not take time off, it is hard to separate my personal life from the artistic work process.

So what about all the thoughts not registered, noted, or deemed unimportant in the moment, or all the things that not even reach my conscious mind? Could this story of an artistic work process have been a different one if I had these data within my reach? The log has really shown me how important the subconscious processes can be! Well. Perhaps. Or maybe the big lines would have been quite similar? Hard to say, but it is probably possible to tell many other stories about the same work process, even with the same data from the log. The story still gives an impression of my work process, even though it can never give the full picture, it tells of what *I* see.

## Curriculum Vitae

### Tone Saastad, Associate Professor, Bergen National Academy of the Arts

Graduated in 1980 from Bergen Kunsthåndverkskole (now Bergen National Academy of the Arts) (1976-1980).  
Member of the Norwegian Association of Arts and Crafts, Norwegian Visual Artists Association, and Norwegian Tekstile Artists.

**Awards and Competitions:** First prize in an open competition on integrating art in public spaces, "Statens Hus" in Moss, 1989. The Georg Jensen Award, Copenhagen, 1990.

**Scholarships and Grants:** The State Establishing Grant 1981, The State Material Grant 1983, Hordaland County Grant 1986, The State Travelling Grant 1988, Bergen Council Grant 1988, Ingrid Lindbäck Langaards Grant 1989, 1994 and 1996, Norwegian State 3-year Working Grant 1990–1992, Scholarship from Anton Chr. Houens fond 1991, State Artist Fee from 1995

**Public acquisitions:** Vestlandske Kunstindustrimuseum (The National Museum of Art and Design in Bergen) 1981, 1985, 1987, 1988, and 1991, Arts Council Norway 1982, 1983 and 1988, Bergen University 1983, Riksgalleriet (now The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design) 1983, Gullfaks A 1985, National Museum of Decorative Arts in Trondheim 1985, 1986, 1988, and 1998, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design in Oslo 1987, and 1992, Gullfaks C 1988, Gol Coucile Office in 1989, The Danish Museum of Art and Design in Copenhagen 1990, The Ministry Transport and Communications 1998, Telenor in Trondheim 2000, The Norwegian University of Life Sciences 2002.

**Commissions:** The student cafeteria at Bergen University 1981, Knappen Nursing home 1983, Åstveit Nursing home 1983, Fana Bank 1984, Sparebanken Vest 1985, Selmer Sande – administration building 1986, Askøy Council Office 1988, Nordfjordeid Post Office 1988, Betanien Nursing home 1989, Ottbragden Nursery school 1990, "Renaissance Cruises 8" 1992, The Norwegian Embassy in Moscow 1993, Dept of Mathematics – Bergen University 1994, Trollanlegene – administraton centre 1994, Sel Council Office 1995, Dept of Comparative Politics – Bergen University 1998.

**Other :** Chasuble for Sælen Church 2003, episcopal vestments for the bishop of Bjørgvin Bishopric 2004.

**Solo Exhibitions:** "6 i Tekstil" at Bryggen Museum in Bergen 1983, Bryne Internasjonale Kunstveke 1983, Nån Ståpp kunsthåndverk in Bergen 1985, Gallery Langegaarden in Bergen 1985, Galleri NK in Stavanger 1987, National Museum Decorative Arts in Trondheim 1988, Hordaland Art Centre in 1988, Nordnorsk Art Centre in Svolvær 1988, Møre og Romsdal Art Centre in Molde 1988, Sogn og Fjordane Art Centre in Førde 1988, Hedmark Art Centre at Hamar 1988, Kunstnerforbundet in Oslo 1990, The Danish Museum of Art and Design in Copenhagen 1990, Gallery F 15 at Jeløya 1991, Tvedestrand Kunstforening 1991, Szczecin in Polen 1992, "Kryss / Crossing Borders" in Bergen Kunstforening 1992, Hå Gamle Prestegard 1993, Oppland Art Centre at Lillehammer 1994, Kunstnerforbundet in Oslo 2001, the Showroom USF in Bergen 2002.

**International Exhibitions:** "Norway Now" in England 1984, Skandinavisk Stofftrykk in Mulhouse, France 1986, Skandinavisk Stofftrykk at Crafts Museum in New York 1988, Den 5. Nordiske Tekstiltriennalen 1989, "Nordiska Textiltryckare" in Stockholm 1990, "Configura 1 – Kunst in Europa" in Erfurt, Germany 1991, "Norwegian Alternatives" in Washington 2000, "Nordic Contemporary Craft" in Gothenburg 2003, "4<sup>th</sup> International Textile Art Exhibition" in Kaunas, Lithuania 2003.

**Other exhibitions:** Norske Kunsthåndverkeres årsutstillinger 17 times since 1980, Statens Kunstutstilling – Høstutstillingen 1987, 1988, 1989, and 1993, Vestlandsutstillingen 1989, 1993, and 1995, "Utopi / Realitet": Utsmykking for bygg and landskap in Bergen 1987, "Tekstil i rom" in Porsgrunn 1987, "Tendenser" Gallery F 15 1988 and 1998, Drammen Museum 1993, "Olympisk festskrud" at Lillehammer 1994, "In Touch": Norwegian and International arts & crafts at Maihaugen during OL in 1994, "Liten og stor" in Stavanger kunstforening 1994, "Jeanne d'Arc" directed by Sørlandet Art Museum 1997 / 1998, "Blå" at Vestfold Kunstnersenter 1997, Miniature Exhibit in the Show Room at USF, Bergen 1997, Raulandsutstillingen 1999, "Metamorfose" at the West Norway Museum of Decorative Art in Bergen m.m. 2001, "Fiber" at The National Museum of Decorative Arts 2002.

**Other Artistic Work, i.e.:** Member of the Norwegian Association of Arts and Crafts' National jury 1988–1990, Scholarship Committee for Bergen Municipality and Hordaland County 1989–1990, Member of the Norwegian Association of Arts and Crafts' National Grant Committee 1995–1997, Hordaland's Regional Commissions Committee 1982–1984 and 1995–1997, commissions consultant at De Prekliniske Institutter in Bergen 1982–1985, commissions consultant in LOOC's (Lillehammer Olympic Organisaton committee) Commissions Committee 1991–1994, commissions consultant at Kalfarvei 31 in Bergen 2000–2001, Bergen University's Committee for Commissions 2003–2006.