

TITLE :

WEAVING

08 JULI 2015

ACTION

ACTIVATION

RE-ENACTMENT

CATALOGUE

HISTORY

SUIT

FABRICS FOR SUITS

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

1937

FABRICS FOR SUITS.

^{ACTION}
WEAVING FABRICS FOR SUITS ON
A MECHANICAL LOOM FROM 1937

WEAVING FABRICS FOR SUITS

A JEU PRESSOTIER

TO WEAVE FABRICS FOR SUITS

ACTIONS

Connected to
fabrication and
to the sartorial
word
FABRIC

The body, the
tactility, the
'embodiment'
garment, object
of style.

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

What kind of fabrics?

Why?

Do you wear them yourself?

When do you produce them?

How?

Based on what tradition?

Are they used for suits?

By whom?

Are they expensive?

Reflections on *Weaving Fabrics for Suits*

Franz Petter Schmidt

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Blue pages: Reflection

White pages: Documents from the project and texts written by others

1. *Weaving Fabrics for Suits* is the title of the work I have produced as a research fellow at The Oslo National Academy of the Arts, in the Arts and Crafts department. I have been a fellow in the Programme for Artistic Research since October 2011. The following reflections are part of the outcome of this research period, along with an exhibition with the same title held at Oslo Kunstforening from March 13 to April 19, 2015, a catalogue and a final public defence.

2. The work *Weaving Fabrics for Suits* departs from the demise and promise of the Norwegian textile industry. The objective has been to take part in maintaining both knowledge and historic material within the context of cultural history, to take part in the development of this industry in Norway for the future and, finally, to create connections among my deep interest in, fascination with and passion for this field, along with an understanding of my own history and experience in the world. These three components are connected to and inform each other, and are different facets of the same subject matter.

3. I am a men's tailor, a weaver and a dyer. I relate to my work as a practitioner and I put various methods into action for both exploring and engaging with documents from the history of this industry. The documents originate in archives, collections and storage rooms located at mills and cultural history museums that have played a part in the research process.

4. When I approach a textile sample in a sample book from the 1930s made at a Norwegian woollen mill and found in its archive, I react to it based on my experience. As a weaver I analyse the construction and materials used. I build on my skills as a dyer to approach the colours. And the tailor in me asks what the fabrics in the sample book could be used for. The sample book makes me proud and sad. It makes me dream; it makes me want to work. It demands a response. It makes me want to weave the fabric and produce a suit.

5. The suit might become the centrepiece in an exhibition; it might become a set of garments I use in situations where I can talk and communicate the story behind the fabric. It makes me want to share my experience and knowledge.

6. I am weaving fabrics for garments. The context for the making is the textile industry, workshops with technical equipment dating from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the most modern digital machines available today.

7. It is twenty-four years since I started tailoring school; fifteen years since I visited the mill at Prinds Augusts Minde in Oslo for the first time, a visit that sparked off my interest in industrial textile production. And I have worked for soon to be four years in the research programme. The research period is a section of a continuous line – a lifelong work – and it ensures that this work will continue.

8. The process has been complex, involving production at three Norwegian weaving mills, an extensive collaboration with colleagues in the fashion design collective HAIK and a smaller collaboration with designer Nina Skarra. I have taken part in a group exhibition at Lillehammer Art

Museum with the work *Til Gudbrandsdalens Uldvarefabrik*, a portrait of the history of the Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill and on the production taking place there today.

9. The key production site in my work is Sjølingstad Woollen Mill, a textile industry museum in Southern Norway. Since 2012 I have worked with employees in the weaving department, especially Einar Kristensen and Gunnveig Sigurdsdatter Helland. Our common project has been to restore a loom that had not been in use since 1948, recreating a material for suits called 727, which was one of the factory's bestsellers in the late 1950s.

10. At Sjølingstad I worked with HAIK on producing fabrics for the winter 2014/15 collection, while the HAIK summer 2015 collection was produced at Krivi vev at Tingvoll in Møre and Romsdal, on the western coast of Norway. The productions at the weaving mills have included dialogues with and technical support from the staff. As part of the exploration of the use of the textiles I have produced, I am collaborating with the tailor Liv Guri Østrem. For *Weaving Fabrics for Suits* she made both a three-piece suit for me, and two remakes of the workman's jacket I used when I worked at Sjølingstad in 2000 and 2001 as head of the dyeing and finishing department.

11. Industrial production, including its historical aspects, has a strong presence in my work. Still, a change of focus has gradually taken place during the time in the research programme. It has moved me towards recognizing and accepting the profound need to understand more about my emotional connection to the places where I have worked, the textiles, the workshops and the methods.

12. For this reason I decided to explore more deeply the emotional and personal reading of the material, a decision based on where I needed to be challenged most. It has been a fragile development, connected to experiments I have performed with various work constellations and methods, but not the least connected to the dialogues I have taken part in, at seminars arranged by the research programme and with colleagues and supervisors. The process has been about observing the changes that occur when I am letting the textile industrial history in itself fall into the background, to enable me, as an emotional and sensual being, to come to the front. And, to open for what this would change in how I develop my work and what it communicates to others.

13. I have left this multi-faceted position unexplored. Not communicated. I have seen this possible position as a threat rather than an opening for a multiple reading of my work and my position. Has it been a question of trust? Pride? Self-esteem? The situation became locked long ago, and the knowledge and reflection have not really developed. At least not on a conscious level.

14. I have had two processes running, one that has been in my private life and another related to my work. Both of these processes have pushed me to an extreme in regards to confronting my need to protect myself, to control and to maintain distance. I have been prevented from intimacy with people, objects and structures I am surrounded by. I have needed these challenges in order to be exposed both to myself and to the other with such an undeniable clarity that there was no place

to escape. No way to avoid confronting the issues behind the situation. I understood intuitively that this would not happen if I continued living the life I used to live. At some point I searched for the challenges I needed, which were given to me through being within the framework of a defined relationship and a defined research programme.

15. The motivation for my work – and this goes back to when I started tailoring school – is based on intuition and linked to my biography. It has been about coming to terms with betrayal, loneliness and sorrow. And, about being gay. The sensibility developed through the experience of being different, on the outside, of having to fight for acceptance and of dealing with the fear of loss. On the deepest level, this work has been about mending and healing. Healing wounds and sorrow through reaching out, constructing, recreating and sharing. Mending and healing myself, mending and healing the loom and the textile sample books in the archive.

16. I bring the experiences back into the work. The personal and intimate, now identified and processed, are brought together with the exploration of industrial textile production and its history. They are connected to questions of tradition and knowledge, cultural historical value, reindustrialisation, the importance of understanding how the things we are surrounded by are made and the ethical importance of the concept of quality.

17. There are now functioning connections between history and production with biography and feelings, the understanding of the material I work with and the development of a language to explore and describe my work, and where it comes from.

18. All parts of the process have been necessary to develop clarity in my intuitive attraction towards this field, this history and the knowledge within them. Clarity in the emotional properties connected to the places, the production and the materials, as well as the values connected to being in social settings, as a partner in collaborations. Connecting a search for pride, value and brilliance on a personal psychological level with the object world, the joy of making and being a skilled colleague.

19. I experienced different ways of working during this project. The aim with these experiments has been to explore the different facets of the field I have been working in, but not necessarily to compare the different engagements and methods or to put them up against each other. The different engagements co-exist, and I need the diversity and the variation to develop my work.

20. The development of the project within the research programme has been an intensifying exploration on my method and my approach. It is a question of different knowledge traditions, and the development of a locus is a result in itself. My locus has been one of the elements at play and the process has been about clarifying a position. This is a process, which is still on-going. The Norwegian research programme offers a possibility for an open orientation, as well as experimentation on what knowledge within this field is, and how it might be developed and disseminated. The exhibition at Oslo Kunstforening is a part of this, as is the reflection, the public defence and the development of new work.

21. Today, based on the experiences from *Weaving Fabrics for Suits*, I take part in discussions in forums that are diverse when it comes to traditions, critical awareness and key interests. I observe that different aspects of the same material – the work I have done – are highlighted depending on the context of presentation. Obvious, perhaps, but challenging nonetheless. I take part in discussions on the development of the textile and fashion industry in Norway, on reindustrialisation and the development of skills needed in the future, on the understanding of the archive, on specific technical issues related to mechanical looms and on the reading of my work related to homosexual identity and experience.

22. *Weaving Fabrics for Suits* is moving from the inside out. It starts in my feelings, intuition, emotions and values. I connect to the outside world through a planned period of making, experimenting and activating production skills in collaboration with colleagues at sites of production. The connections also happen through contextualizing and mapping references, and through reflection, writing and the identification of structures in the material and the experiences that are developed. This serves as a preparation for the publication of objects, texts and images. The experiences of and reflections on the publication form the basis for context, references, further reflection and the development of new work.

Interview by
Gjertrud Steinsvåg
for the crafts
magazine
'Kunsthandverk'
Launched
June 2015

6 7 JULI 2015

DET FULLENDTE OBJEKTET

Weaving Fabrics for Suits blei vist i Oslo Kunstforening tidlegare i år. Utstillinga, som synte installasjonar med arkivmateriale, tekstilar, dressar, fotografar, arbeidsnotat og tekstar, er avslutninga på Franz Petter Schmidt sitt stipendiatprosjekt. Utstillinga markerar dermed slutten på fleire år med utforsking, engasjement, redigering og val. Utgangspunktet har vore Franz sitt arbeid på både Sjølingstad Uldvarefabrik, nær Mandal, og Gudbrandsdalens Uldfabrikk på Lillehammer. Gjertrud Steinsvåg har snakka med Schmidt om det fullendte objektet – den ultimate blå dressen som berar av verdier, lengsel og verdighet.

Tekst av Gjertrud Steinsvåg

Dei tre romma i Oslo Kunstforening handsama tre hovudspekt i prosjektet: fabrikkene, herredressen, prosessen. I det fyrste rommet sag ein Franz sitt utval av objekt frå Seligren på Tingvoll og Sjølingstad Uldvarefabrik. Fabrikkane får sine historier fortald gjennom fargeprover, arbeidsstolar, fargebokser, reiskap, fagbøker og fotodokumentasjon. Objektet står fram som både museale – og som søppel. Dette fyrste rommet, fabrikkene, er eit ganske umiddelbart møte med spørsmål om vår verdilovføring av materiell og immateriell arv. I det neste rommet presenterer to herredressar saman med eit fotografi av elva som har vore av avgjerande tyding for drifta av Sjølingstad Uldvarefabrik, som i dag fungerer som eit levande museum. Den eine

dressen, den grøne, er laga av Siv Stoldal i designkollektivet HAIK, medan den andre, den blå, er skreddarsydd av Liv Guri Østrem. Til Franz sin eigen kropp. I det siste rommet trer vi inn i Franz sitt arbeidsrom, og inviterer inn i prosess og produksjon. Her er det fri flyt av rullar med tekstilar frå Gudbrandsdalens Uldvarefabrik og Sjølingstad, fargeprovar, permar med notat, oppskrifter, gamle tekstilhistoriebøker.

Denne dramaturgien skapar ei kompleks utstilling. Den står fram som grundig gjennomarbeida, og laga med noko som eg ikkje heilt forstår kva er. Men det tiltrekker og fascinerer meg – og oppmodar til nyfiken å gå ned i laga og inn i ladningen av kvart enkelt element. Det slår



Foto: Cecilie Tyrl Helt

«Jeg er grunnleggende opptatt av søke sammenhenger og forstå hvordan denne verdenen henger sammen, og hvordan vi som mennesker forholder oss til den og tingene rundt oss.»

– Franz Petter Schmidt

meg at det er personen Franz som fascinerer meg. At like mye som at Weaving Fabrics for Suits er et nær, nesten romantisk fortelling om materiale og kollektiv arv, så er utstillinga ei fortelling om Franz sjølv. Kanskje har det å gjera med dette grundige. At utstillinga står fram som grundig og sympatisk, fordi Franz er det. Det siste vil det tilsette på Sjølingsstad Utdyretfabrik sadfeste. Eller kanskje er det at eg har meg triggja av å oppleve både distanse og openheit. Korleis Franz – og utstillinga – utstrålar både imøtekommende varme, samstundes som det er noko tilbakeholdent der. I dette møtetingsforholdet søker eg ein identitet. Og kanskje gjør Franz det same. Viste de at Franz er døypst Lars Petter? Men at han som 11-åring ba foreldra om å få heitte Franz, det same som faren sin? Kanskje er det denne evige jakta på ein eller annan identitet, som gjer at den skreddarsydda blå dressen opptrer som det fullendte objekt. Eller som Franz sjølv har sagt: at den skreddarsydda dressen er den ultimete metoden for å kommunisere med offentlegheita.

Endeleg ser vi stripende utstillinga di. Letta?

– Ja, uten tvil. Først og fremst fordi jeg er utrolig stolt av prosjektet, og har en kroppslig ro over hvordan resultatet har blitt. Det sitter. I Weaving Fabrics for Suits har jeg turt å selv være mer til stede i arbeidet, og koblingen mellom min personlige historie og det dokumentariske materialet treir bedre frem.

Det er et komplekst prosjekt som visast i Oslo Kunsthøgskole. Eg tek meg i å søkje ei kjerne i prosjektet, og kvar gong eg trur eg har funne den, dukkar det opp andre ring som tek merkenda mi. Handlar det om utryddingsstrua norsk tekstilproduksjon? Er det ei sosial/politisk prosjekt? Handlar det om å vidareføre tradisjonar og kunnskap – er det ei proteksjonistisk prosjekt? Innovativt design og blytunge skreddartradisjonar kjem tydeleg fram gjennom dei to dressane og samarbeidet med HAiK og Liv Guri Østrem – kva for rolle spelar dette? Kva handlar Weaving Fabrics for Suits til sjynde og sist om?

– Det handler om alt du nevner. Jeg er grunnleggende opptatt av søke sammenhenger og forstå hvordan denne verdenen henger sammen, og hvordan vi som mennesker forholder oss til den og tingene rundt oss. Arbeidet jeg

gjør og det jeg undersøker reflekterer nødvendigheten av å se nærmere på sammenhengene: objektets betydning, hvordan de er markert, det sansemessige, det sensuelle. I Weaving Fabrics for Suits var første fase å ta utgangspunkt i min opplevelse, kunnskap og erfaring fra Sjølingsstad, for siden å orientere meg bredere, i norsk tekstilindustri generelt. Men så viste det seg etter hvert at det nok en gang ble Sjølingsstad, og arbeidet jeg gjorde der, som ble ryggrøden i prosjektet. Kjernen. Og de andre undersøkelsene ble mer som eksperimenter. Som satellitter. Jeg har ikke et instrumentelt forhold til hvor informasjonen dannet et rammeverk hvor jeg kan eksperimentere og abstrahere når jeg skal fortelle min historie om disse fabrikkene, og alt hva det representerer. Den første fasen i prosjektet er orienteringen, observasjonen, hvor jeg registrerer min tilnærming og fascinasjon – om det er noe der i det hele tatt. Så tar jeg en rekke valg, på mange måter etter instinkt, eller intuisjon, og forblir lenge i en åpen produksjonsfase, en undersøkelse, en orientering i materialet, som inkluderer det å arbeide i verkstedet. Veving, farging etc. Denne undersøkelsen er fantastisk, krevende og åpen. Da glemmer jeg meg selv og jobber dogget rundt. Men det er alltid et sluttpunkt, når det er nødvendig å komme til overflaten med en disposisjon av dette materialet som viser min lesning av det, og som det er mulig å forholde seg til for andre. Da starter den smertefulle og krevende redigeringen. Mange valg og mange fravalg. Jeg må være til stede fullt og helt i denne prosessen for å holde materialet i live, for å fremkalle historiene, og samtidig vise at det er jeg som består bak bevidsthetsene. Alle disse valgene – senere betydningen av alle elementene, først materialet, begrensede tilpassede formater, se for seg hvem som skal få historien – det gjør jævlige vondt. Det krever jo så masse mot! Og så stiller man alle disse spørsmålene til seg selv, om hva i all verden man holder på med, og om det i det hele tatt er en interessant historie for andre enn en selv.

Og då representerar desse fasane, systema og objekta ei slags utforsking?

– Ja, det kan du si. De ulike aspektene er nødt til å se





i sammenheng med hverandre, slik som med alt i livet. Det historiske og dokumentariske materialet fra fabrikkene, tekstilens oppbygging, det harde arbeidet, tekstilene som blir et plagg i samanheng med andre. Alle disse tingene er viktige bestanddeler i min personlige søken.

Kva er det du selger?

– Brilljans.

Kvifor er brilljans viktig?

– Det er her lidenskapen min ligger. I det å oppnå det fullendte. Det handler dypt sett om å finne ens selv-respekt og verdighet.

Men det må vere noko meir her. For eg opplever nok at brilljans – som eigenskap – ofte kan verke distansert og nesten kjølig. Med di tette kopling til fabrikkane og dei dokumentariske har eg dessutan høvrt fleire snakke om ditt prosjekt som eit reinnare politisk standpunkt om tekstilindustri og moteindustri. Men for meg, så slår det inn ei anna kjensle av varme inn. I Weaving Fabrics for Suits slår dette systematiske og gjennomarbeidde uttrykket gjennom med ei intens kjærteik. Kjærteik til materiala, historia, ikkje minst folka på fabrikkane, dressane. Kva er denne emosjonelle erklæringa?

– Sorgbærbelisdse.

Sorg?

– Ja. Stupendiatperioden har vært utdøende for å komme til en kjærne som jeg nok intuitivt har visst at har vært der, men som jeg ikke tidligere har fått grepet på. Å jobbe med dette historiske materialet representerer en måte å forstå hvordan materielle ting kan få verdifull betydning og deknere oss på. Det har

minnet meg på, og hjulpet meg til å håndtere en berøringsangst for min egen arv.

Kva for arv er det snakk om?

– Det dreier seg om flere ting. Men viktige hendelser har preget meg, som at huset vårt brant ned da jeg var tolv år. Jeg har utrolig sterke minner av tingene som forsvant, og jeg husker det som et dramatisk tap for hele familien. Det er et minne om hvordan materielle verdier var av allor stor betydning for mine foreldre, og hvordan de bygget opp fasade og identitet gjennom fysiske manifestasjoner. For faren min var desuten det å ha hytte viktig, og noe han virkelig fikk til. Han døde da jeg var 23, og kort tid etter solgte mor den – uten å forstå det emosjonelle aspektet av hva den hytta representerte for vår familie. Det er nettopp det som er det personlige ståstedet her. Å finne ut av hvordan slike materielle tap er så definerende i det verdigrunnlaget jeg har vokst opp med.

Har du sett Jon Fosse siitt stykke Og aldri meir skal vi skiljast?

– Nei.

Det er ei fantastisk stykke om tap, der den kvinnelige husdrolla er blitt forlate. Ho ankrar seg fast i heimen sin, og med Fosse sine karakteristiske repeterende setningar, er det ei sterk oppleving av korleis ho trivleidd på fysiske ting for å taile tapet. Eg har jo tanga mine's Ting erstattor relasjonar. Når du snakkar om foreldra dine siitt forhold til ting, så er det med den same type kritikk om at ting ikkje er viktige nok. Men når eg tenkjer på denne sorgbandaminga gjennom Weaving Fabrics for Suits, så er det med større ambivalens. For utstillinga uttrykkjer jo



også kjærteik til ting? Ein slags påstand om verdinessig innhald i objekta? Og at brilljansen i å lage dei har verdi?

– Ja, ambivalens er et godt ord. Jeg har jaktet på mitt eget verdigrunnlag så lenge jeg kan huske. Å være brilliant eller gjøre noe brilljant har blitt del av den jaktten. Da jeg kom ut som homofil som 20-åring, var den umiddelbare reaksjonen fra mine foreldre en avvísning, og jeg har måttet jobbe steinhardt for å få aksept for, og akseptere, den jeg er. Saken etter verdighet har definitivt vært et tema. Jeg har jaktet på det fullendte objektet som representerer denne verdigheten, og har på mange måter kommet til et veldig viktig stoppested i Weaving Fabrics for Suits.

Den blå dressen?

– Ja. Til tross for usikkerheten, har jeg alltid stolt på min egen kropp, og de plaggene jeg tar på meg. Klar forteller alltid en historie om hvem man er, eller hvem man vil være. Men den blå dressen bærer med seg en helt annen kompleksitet. Den er en naturlig konsekvens av mitt arbeid med å veve, farge og etterbehandle dette stoffet på Sjølingstad. Materialet forteller den komplekse historien om fabrikkene. Om alt disse historiene kan bety eller symboliserer. Den er sydd til min kropp, og viser mine lengder og vinkler og skjovheter, og den omslutter meg. Den blå dressen er et bilde av meg, en manifestasjon av hvem jeg er, eller den jeg drømmer om å være.

Du verkar tøm? Det er jo ikkje berre ein stipendiatperiode som er ferdig, men du skildrar ei sorg som kommunisert og plassert?

– Stipendiatperioden har gjort meg tryggere. Stipendiatperioden handler om både tid og økonomi som legger til rette for intensivering av tanker som gjør at

man knækker sine egne koder. Særlig viktig har det vært å møte kritiske samtalepartnere i mine veiledere og kolleger, som også kommer fra musikkfeltet, design og billedkunst. Disse krysskillingene har vært utrolig lærerike og intense erfaringer, hvor jeg har måttet åpne opp. Det har styrket min egen intuitive anelse av hva jeg driver med, og gjort at jeg forstår meg selv bedre.

Og no?

– Ja, si det. Gi meg litt tid.

Det skal eg. Men eg veit at du har fått ansvaret for dei gamle veivertiet i Prindsen i bydelen Grünerløkka i Oslo, som har stått stille sidan 1990-åra, og blei freda for fire år sidan. Sett uansett, så tenker eg at dette må vere ei teilegrind for deg? Nye ultimate framgangsmåtar for å møte offentlegleita med dine historier?

– En teilegrind ladet med stort alvor og respekt. I jeg vet ikke enda hva det er. Samtidig er jeg blitt så klar over nye sider i meg selv. Vi snakker jo nærmest om et møtepunkt for mange parter og samarbeidsformer, men jeg vet ikke enda hva det er. Samtidig er jeg blitt så klar om å tilfelle. Prindsen har et utrolig potensiale til å bli et helt annet sted. Den har vært forende for Sjølingstad og Gudbranddalen, hvor jeg skal søke nok en fabrikkhistorie, nok et stykke tekstil. Men det er noe med Prindsen som kaller på meg. Det kan godt hende at jeg fremdeles går rundt der som 75-åring. En engasjert og oppdatert 75-åring. Ikledt roddmet.

Fra venstre:
Weaving Fabrics for Suits
på Oslo Kunstforening
Foto: Christian Hansen.
Weaving Fabrics for Suits
på Oslo Kunstforening
Foto: Christian Hansen.
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Foto: Christian Hansen.

07 JULI 2015

FRANZ PETTER SCHMIDT – PORTRAIT INTERVIEW

THE CONSUMMATE OBJECT

Text by Gjertrud Steinsvåg

English translation
of interview by
Gjertrud Steinsvåg
for the
Norwegian Crafts
Website

The exhibition Weaving Fabrics for Suits was on show at Oslo Art Society earlier this year (13 March – 19 April 2015). Featuring installations consisting of archival material, textiles, suits, photographs, work notes and texts, it represented the final stage in Franz Petter Schmidt's period as a research fellow at Oslo National Academy of the Arts. The project marks the end of several years of research, hard physical work, revision and decision making. The starting point for the research project was Schmidt's earlier work experience at Sjølingstad Woollen Mill, near Mandal, and Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill at Lillehammer. Gjertrud Steinsvåg talked with Schmidt about the 'consummate object' – the ultimate blue suit as a carrier of values, longing and dignity.

The three rooms at Oslo Art Society focus on three key aspects in the project: the factory, the man's suit, and the research process. In the first room, one sees Franz Schmidt's selection of objects from Sellgren at Tingvoll (i.e., Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill) and Sjølingstad Woollen Mill. The history of these factories is told through colour samples, work-benches, tools, professional manuals and photo-documentation. The objects appear as museum objects but also as things that could just as well be carted off to the garbage dump. The first room, which represents the factory, immediately triggers questions about the way we value material and immaterial heritage. In the second room we see two men's suits and a photograph of the river that has been crucial for Sjølingstad Woollen Mill's operations – even today it continues as a working industrial museum. The green suit is made by Siv Støldal, a member of the design collective HAIK, while the blue suit is bespoke-tailored by Liv Guri Østrem. It's made for Franz' own body. The last room, which represents Franz' work space, incites us to engage with processes and production. Here there are spools of yarn and bolts of textiles from Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill and from Sjølingstad: colour samples, notebooks, recipes and old textile history books.

This dramaturgy creates a complex exhibition. While thoroughly orchestrated, it is imbued with a certain *je ne sais quoi*. Still, it attracts and fascinates me – and it makes me curious to dig into the layers of symbolic value in each element. It strikes me that it is the person Franz who fascinates me. That while *Weaving Fabrics for Suits* is a local, almost romantic story about materials and collective heritage, it is also a story about Franz himself. Perhaps it has to do with thoroughness: that the exhibition seems thoroughly researched and appealing, because so also is Franz. People at Sjølingstad Woollen Mill would attest to his appeal. Or maybe I allow myself to be intrigued by his combined qualities of distance and openness. How Franz – and the exhibition – radiate both welcoming warmth and a sense of reserve. In this relation of contrasts, I seek an identity. And maybe Franz does as well. Did you know that Franz was christened Lars Petter? But that when he was 11 years old, he asked his parents if he could be called ‘Franz’, like his father? Maybe it’s this eternal search for one or another identity that makes the blue tailored suit appear as the consummate object. Or as Franz himself says: the tailored suit is the ultimate method for communicating with the public.

We’re finally seeing your research-fellow exhibition. Relieved?

Yes, absolutely. First of all because I’m incredibly proud of the project and I feel confident about the result. My aim for *Weaving Fabrics for Suits* was to be more open with my own personal history, so the linkage between me and the documentation comes more to the fore.

This is a complex project you are exhibiting at Oslo Art Society. I find myself seeking the core theme, and whenever I think I’ve identified it, something else grabs my attention. Is it about Norwegian textile production under threat of extinction? Is it a socio-political project? Is it about perpetuating traditions and knowledge – is it a protectionist project? Innovative design and the lead-heavy tradition of tailoring clearly come across through the two suits and your collaboration with HAIK and Liv Guri Østrem – but what role do these themes play? What, ultimately, is Weaving Fabrics for Suits about?

It’s about all the themes you mention. I’m fundamentally interested in seeking connections and in understanding how we as people relate to our material and immaterial surroundings. My work and research reflect the necessity to look more deeply into the connections: the meaning of objects, how they are symbolic markers, sensory experience, sensual experience.

In the project *Weaving Fabrics for Suits*, the first phase was to take recourse in the knowledge and experience I accrued at Sjølingstad, then to orient myself in the Norwegian textile industry more generally. But then it eventually turned out that Sjølingstad and the work I did there became the project's backbone. The core. The other research themes then became more like experiments. Satellites.

I don't have an instrumental relation to how I should use information. Instead I leave open the possibility of moving the elements around to see where they fit in order to tell the story I need to tell. The information establishes a framework for experimenting and working more abstractly when telling a story about these factories and all they represent. The project's first phase entails orientation, observation and registering my attraction and fascination – if there is any. Then I make a number of decisions, to some extent based on instinct, or on intuition, and remain for a long time in an open production phase. This is a time to explore and orient myself in the material, and it involves weaving, dyeing wool, etc., in the workshop. This part of the research is fantastic, demanding and open. I become absorbed and work around the clock.

But this stage eventually comes to an end and is followed by a process of making my reading of the research material accessible to others. This is when the often painful and demanding editing process begins. Many selections and de-selections. I need to remain mentally present throughout this process in order to sustain the material's vitality, to conjure the history but simultaneously show that it's me who is behind all the editing. All these choices – to sort the meaning and significance of all the elements, to understand the material, delimit, adapt formats, identify who will be reading the story – all this is terribly painful. It requires courage. And then to pose questions to myself, about what in the world I'm doing, and whether it will be an interesting story for anyone other than myself.

And then all these phases, systems and objects represent a kind of Weltanschauung?

Yes, you could say that. The various aspects need to be seen in relation to each other. The historical and documentary material from the factories, the construction of the textiles, the hard physical work, the textiles that become a garment through collaboration with others. All these aspects are important parts of my personal seeking.

What is it you seek?

Brilliance.

Why is brilliance important?

I'm passionate about it. To achieve perfection. It's ultimately about finding one's self-respect and dignity.

But there must be something more here. Because I experience that brilliance – as a quality – can often seem distanced and almost cold. With your close links to the factories and the documentation, I've heard several people talk about your project as a purely political stand point about the textile and fashion industries. But for me, there's also a sense of warmth. In Weaving Fabrics for Suits, there's a systematic and well-cogitated expression of intense love. Love for materials, history, not least for the people working at the factories, the suits. What is this emotional declaration?

A means for coping with loss.

Grieving?

Yes. The research period has helped me come to the core of something I've known was there, but which I hadn't understood. Working with this historical material represents a way of understanding how material things can have valuable significance and define us as persons. It's brought back memories and helped me understand my legacy.

What legacy are you referring to?

It's about several things. Important events have left their mark on me, such as when our house burned down when I was 12 years old. I have such strong memories of the things that were lost, and I remember it of course as a dramatic loss for the whole family. But it's also a memory of how things of material value were far too significant for my parents. How they had built a façade and identity based on physical manifestations. For my father, having a cabin was also important. He died when I was 23. Shortly thereafter, my mother sold it –

without understanding the emotional aspect – of what that cabin represented for our family. All this personal history is involved here. To understand how or why such material losses have the power to define the core values I grew up with.

Have you seen Jon Fosse's play And We'll Never be Parted?

No.

It's a fantastic work about loss. The female protagonist is deserted by her husband. She anchors herself in her home, and with Fosse's characteristically repeating sentences, there's a strong experience of how she clings to physical things in order to cope with loss. 'But I have my things!' Things replace relationships. When you talk about your parents' relation to things, it seems to be an instance of turning the criticism on its head: of things not being important enough. But when I think about this grieving through Weaving Fabrics for Suits, there seems to be greater ambivalence. Because doesn't the exhibition also express a love for things? A kind of claim about the value-related content in objects? And that the brilliance of making the objects has value?

Yes, ambivalence is a fitting description. I've searched for my own fundamental values for as long as I can remember. The ideal of being brilliant or to do something brilliant has become part of this endeavour. When I 'came out' as gay at 20, the immediate reaction from my parents was rejection, and I've had to work extremely hard to be accepted for what I am and to accept myself. The search for dignity has definitely been a theme. I've searched for the consummate object that represents this dignity, and have in many ways come to an important terminus in *Weaving Fabrics for Suits*.

The blue suit?

Yes. Despite uncertainty, I've always relied on my own body and on the clothing I wear. Clothes always tell a story about who you are, or who you want to be. But the blue suit, for me, carries an entirely different complexity. It's a natural consequence of my work with weaving and dyeing at Sjølingstad. The material tells the factory's complex history. About the things this history can mean or symbolize. It's sewn for my body and shows my lengths and

angles and imbalances, and it envelopes me. The blue suit is a picture of me, a manifestation of who I am, or who I dream of being.

You seem to have been through catharsis. It's of course not just a research period you've finished, but you also seem to suggest that the process of mourning has been communicated and shelved?

The research period has made me more self-assured. It's been a matter of having both the time and the funds to do a type of intense thinking that enables you to break your own codes. It's been particularly important to meet critical discussion partners such as my advisors and colleagues, who also have backgrounds within the fields of music, design and visual art. The interdisciplinary aspects have been amazingly fruitful and intense experiences, and they've required that I open up. They've strengthened my own intuition about what I'm doing and enabled me to understand my position better.

And now?

Good question. Give me a little time.

I will. But I know that you've taken over responsibility for the old weaving factory at Prindsen in the Grünerløkka area of Oslo, which has been closed since the 1990s and was listed as a cultural heritage site four years ago. As an external observer, I imagine that this must be like a playpen for you? New ways of telling your stories to the public?

A playpen charged with great seriousness and respect, in any case. Prindsen has unbelievable potential to be a place where diverse types of people and forms of collaboration can intersect, but I don't have an overview yet. At the same time, I've become so aware of different aspects of my work through the research project. So it's irrelevant to repeat the type of schema used at the Sjølingstad and Gudbrandsdalen Woollen Mills. For Prindsen I need a new angle. An angle I'm sure I'll find. There's something about Prindsen that calls to me. It could very well be that I will still be there as a 75-year old. A fully engaged and well-informed 75-year-old. Perhaps wearing a blue suit.

23. This dream I dreamt several times as a child. I was lying on a table of stone in the middle of a room. The room had a circular shape, with a high ceiling and no windows. Dark. All the walls were covered with shelves. On the shelves there were bottles of all kinds, containing medicine and ointments. I was passively waiting to be embalmed. The person who was going to perform the embalming was an old man, with a long beard – something between a medic and a sorcerer. I was terrified. The ritual never began.

24. I don't understand where the models for these images came from. I was five and six when I had this recurring dream. Why do I think about this dream now? The skin, the vulnerability, the sensation of being naked and cold, and the expectation of the ointment on my skin, like something waxy, greasy – the cold becoming warmer. Loneliness, need for comfort and fear of death. The colours in the room were similar to the colours at Sjølingstad Woollen Mill. The dyer at Sjølingstad as the sorcerer dyeing the woollen yarns and fabrics.

25. Wool offers protection and warmth, but can also be hard and scratchy to the skin. It is something about my relation to wool that is primal. The lanolin oil from fleece and skin, the natural fibre, protein, like human hair, creates an affinity, a bodily connection. Fundamentally it has to do with survival. Felted wool is believed to be the first textile product, made by copying processes that people had observed happening naturally on the animals. The production of wool is linked to human existence. Rural life, cycles and production according to the seasons. In spring and summer the wool is sheared, and shearing at different times gives a variety of qualities. The spinning and dyeing is also done in the summer. In autumn and winter: spinning, dyeing and weaving.

26. Wool is connected to my knowledge of sewing, dyeing and finishing. It has to do with the production I know at the mills where I have worked, and to the skills of a men's tailor. The suit as an extension of the body, my body. The textile as tissue.

27. The textiles in the sample book from the archive at Sjølingstad Woollen Mill are made from wool. Wool for some of the qualities was bought from local farmers living close to the mill. They could deliver wool they had sheared at their farms, and being paid in finished fabrics. The mill also bought fleece from Norwegian sheep at the wool market in Stavanger and finished yarn from abroad. There is a wonderful box with samples in beautiful shades from a Belgian spinning company in the archive at Sjølingstad.

28. When I worked at the mill I sometimes ran the wool washing system. It was a heavy and rather rough operation, where fleece directly from the sheep was soaked in warm water before being rinsed in an oval shaped basin and dried in a special drying chamber. The smell of animals, urine, dirt and grease was overwhelming. At the same time it was satisfactory to go from time to time through the first of a long series of refining processes of the raw material, from fleece to a beautiful woven textile. I remember the physical challenge it was to move soaking wet and heavy wool from the basin to the centrifuge, from the centrifuge to the dryer in a damp and unpleasant environment. I was never so tired after a day's work at the mill as after a day of wool washing.

08 JULI 2015

Stian Vådne
Carrying fleece
at Spillingstad
Wollen Mill
1950's



29. This is the first paragraph of the revised project description from April 2012.

The starting point of my project is the Norwegian textile industry and industrial history, and I build on my own working experience from Sjølingstad Woollen Mill in Lindesnes. I'm exploring issues related to processes of change in the industry, with a focus on the mechanisms at work when a company is established, is operational and is liquidated. I relate to the historical development of the production of woollen fabrics in Norway and in light of this, I examine the importance of craftsmanship and skill, and how specific knowledge of industrial textile production has developed, been transmitted and preserved.

What is here? An element of sorrow, the waning industry, an understanding of value – mechanisms at work when a company goes bankrupt. And I am present. The craftsman and colleague. Worried about the development and preservation of skills. I could just as well have written about my father, when he lost most of his money and died soon after from cancer. And my search for self-esteem and pride in myself through becoming a tailor. A craftsman. But I didn't at the time.

30. The research process has created a necessity for me to develop a language that clarifies and communicates my thinking, and the experiences both from the process and the reflection. The work and the language describing it have developed side by side. It has been experimental, bringing to the surface the emotional and psychological structures that were relevant to this work, relevant in connection to the historic material, to the logic of the production processes and to a certain set of values.

31. I use new words and new concepts. And a different style. The development of thought and language towards intimacy, even crossing the threshold to the private. The language is catching up with an intimacy that has always been there in the material, which is the reason for the need to experiment with genres of writing, to let the façade fall.

32. Today I write about identity issues, about being gay, about the process of weaving the fabric for the suit and having it made as an open expression of longing, vulnerability and outreach. I write a story about a longing for erotic encounters. The textile and the masculine. Warmth, belonging, skin, muscle, wool, closeness, affection and sensuality.

33. The process of writing and editing a text is the same as when I work on an exhibition. I produce a large body of material that I work on through long and complicated processes of editing. The catalogue texts were edited partly based on writing I had done during the research period, and partly on new texts written in the last part of the process. My intention was to challenge my regular way of expressing my thoughts through text, and to experiment with the style I use in my private log. The narrative appeared during the writing process, describing my experience with Sjølingstad Woollen Mill, historically, but also on the production of the 727 fabric.

Texts for the
weaving fabrics
for suits.
Catalogue

The Stream

Sjølingstad, May 6 – September 24, 2014

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

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

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

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

Three weeks became two years.

There is one specific memory from that first time I came here, which is particularly strong – the view of the stream, and the green hill behind it, just by the bend in the road where the village starts at the Thorsager house. The spring came very early that year. It was warm and intense.

The view of the stream merged with the landscape in the book,

and my memory from the moss garden in Kyōto. A dark shiny green.

Where did I live in Oslo at that time? In Görbitzgate, I think.

The silence here is powerful.

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

The mill is still here.

The Mill

Grendehuset, Sjølingstad Woollen Mill, November 17, 2011

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

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

I went to have lunch – quite a long break – eating and reading the paper. I put on my windbreaker, brought my camera and went outside to take pictures. I crossed the bridge and took some photos of the mill from up the hill. Nice angle. I decided to go for a walk up

the road towards Romedal. I took pictures of the dam, the stream and the lake, before heading back to the mill. Paul was the only one still at work.

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

The Heritage

Stockholm, December 11, 2014

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

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

During the fall of 2012 I visited a weaving mill at Tingvoll at the point when the production was about to be closed down for good. Tools, equipment, samples and documents were lying around

in obvious neglect. People that had worked at the mill for decades had lost their jobs.

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

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

In 2001 and 2002, I was head of the dyeing and finishing section at Sjølingstad Woollen Mill. The mill was established in 1894 in a rural area close to the town of Mandal in southern Norway. Since regular production ended in 1984, Sjølingstad has been operating as a museum with a small-scale production of woollen fabrics and yarns made using machines dating from the 1920s to the 1960s. Both the original location and the mill's production knowledge are being preserved, creating a unique environment for exploring a historic textile production typical of this industry in Norway.

The Sample Book
Testico, February 6, 2014

The first time I visited the archive at Sjølingstad, I had been working at the mill for some time. I was instructed to enter the room

quickly and close the door behind me to prevent moths from following. It was quite a cramped and chaotic space.

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

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

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

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

The samples suggest response.

I perform a technical analysis. I define the construction and test the yarn. The density and the surface give information on the settings of the loom and the methods of finishing that have been used. I approach the colours through experiments in the dyeing workshop. I make selections with the intention to recreate the fabrics using the

equipment in the mill as it is today. The machinery is old, some of the knowledge has been lost, and parts of the process are missing.

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

The Loom

Sjølingstad, September 24 – November 6, 2014

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

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

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

Assembling, adjusting, mending.

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

It is a challenge.

Unpredictable.

Not rhythmical.

When we worked together at Sjølingstad in May this year we reached a turning point. We went through a series of profound adjustments with one of the other looms in the workshop as a model.

We discovered that there were significant, but almost hidden, differences between the looms. The Laurdal loom started to perform better. Still unbalanced, but we started believing in it.

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

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

The Fabric

Oslo, January 28, 2015

The fabric and the production are inseparable. The origin of the word fabric is from Latin *fabrica*, meaning 'something skillfully produced,' from the word *faber*: 'a worker in metal, stone, etc.'

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

The fabric is the result of a bodily engagement, the planning and the intuitive responses to the process and the materials. The processes of weaving tend to be complex and sometimes long-winded. Sometimes it is a struggle. The threads are weak, the machine is unbalanced and unpredictable. I am unfocused. A well-made fabric

is a strong and sensual experience. At times it happens. Production can be deeply satisfying.

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

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

The Suit

Testico, February 5, 2014

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

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

The hand stitching is an essential part of making a suit. Of course. But I didn't know.

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

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

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

34. I am searching for recognition and identification in the past, in my own history and in the histories of others. The movement between places, epochs in time, objects and productions. It is a question of feelings and emotions, and on value. To connect I need to understand. I find inspiration and visual guidelines in history, and my intention is to use the historic material to give rise to questions that I find relevant today and for the future. I see my actions as a contribution to the continuation of this production in Norway. My work is based on heritage and history, but I do it now, and I display it now.

35. The sample book in the archive at Sjølingstad Woollen Mill, which has served as a starting point for a long process of restoring and remaking, is museum property, but I am still allowed to take it out of its box, look at it and handle it, even take it to my studio in Oslo. There are aspirations connected to it. The book becomes a symbol of the hope the museum has for something new to happen, and it was accepted by both the museum and me as an object of transition. Of negotiation between past and present.

36. The places, objects and processes, all parts of my work, are as pieces in floating situations of negotiations between intimacy and distance, purpose and meaninglessness, stillness and action, hope and despair. There is a movement from the archive and the storage, through the workshop and to the gallery space, the catalogue and further dissemination. All of it negotiations on values, framing, changes, and transitions.

37. I build a body of texts, samples, images, souvenirs and objects that might become an archive. Motivated through my need to come close, to express my desire and passion, joy and sadness. I see the gathering and collecting of material, which again is framed or categorised not as a constraining act, but performed with empathy. And it is in flux.

38. Is it true that gay people are more concerned with issues of loss and sorrow?

39. Is it true that gay people collect more, and differently, than other people?

40. Is it true that gay people see the importance of stories and histories that other people tend to overlook?

41. I am to a large degree working on an untold story, to shed light on a part of our cultural history that is not valued and not defined, but only written in fragments by others. When I make people talk I sense their eagerness to pass on a story that they feel is important to tell. They tell this story to me, and their story becomes a part of my work. I am not disinterested and objective. I engage, read and edit the material freely. Not as an historian with a responsibility of telling a precise story about a specific place, technique or skill.

42. My experience from the work *Til Gudbrandsdalens Uldvarefabrik* that I did for Lillehammer Art Museum was that the company and its strong history created a situation where I felt responsible to

tell a story the owners and the staff at the mill could recognize and relate to. This directed my work and created a situation where I lost, or let go of, aspects that had to do with my own history and my experiences. This made the disposition of the material unbalanced and withdrawn. I disappeared as the author and felt a distance to the material that I had worked on for a long time. The responsibility to tell an accurate history of the mill, as well to convey a representative image of the company as it is today and its goals for the future, made me lose touch. I became the historian I don't want to be.

43. Through my emotionally charged search through shelves and cardboard boxes in storages and archives, through my engagement with people connected to production and conservation and through my own production, I create a material that might be seen as an archive, suggesting a structure and organization to be displayed, telling stories.

44. I gather some elements at a specific time to form an installation and then take it apart again, to be organized differently, find other relations and tell other stories in other constellations. The documentation from the process becomes a part of an archive of process material I have built through all of the stages of my education and practice. The objects I have gathered, saved or borrowed from the various places I have worked at or visited will be returned to the museum collections, or be included in museum collections for the first time. Some objects are mine to keep. The blue suit I am not sure what to do with.

one of the
photos used in
the exhibition
catalogue.
Souvenirs for
the time in
the program



08 JULI 2015

Project description 727
Sjølingstad Woollen Mill
for Weaving Fabrics for
Suits Oslo Kunst -
forening 2015

727

Sjølingstad Woollen Mill was established by August Hoven in 1894. The mill soon became a cornerstone business in the Mandal region, and employed around ninety people at its most. The village and the community Sjølingstad grew around the factory, including a school, shop and a post office.

The mill produced yarns and woollen fabrics, often with raw materials from local farmers, but also with yarn purchased abroad. The products were sold throughout southern Norway. The company developed steadily and had positive growth until towards the end of the 1960s. Regular commercial production ended in 1984, after ninety years of business.

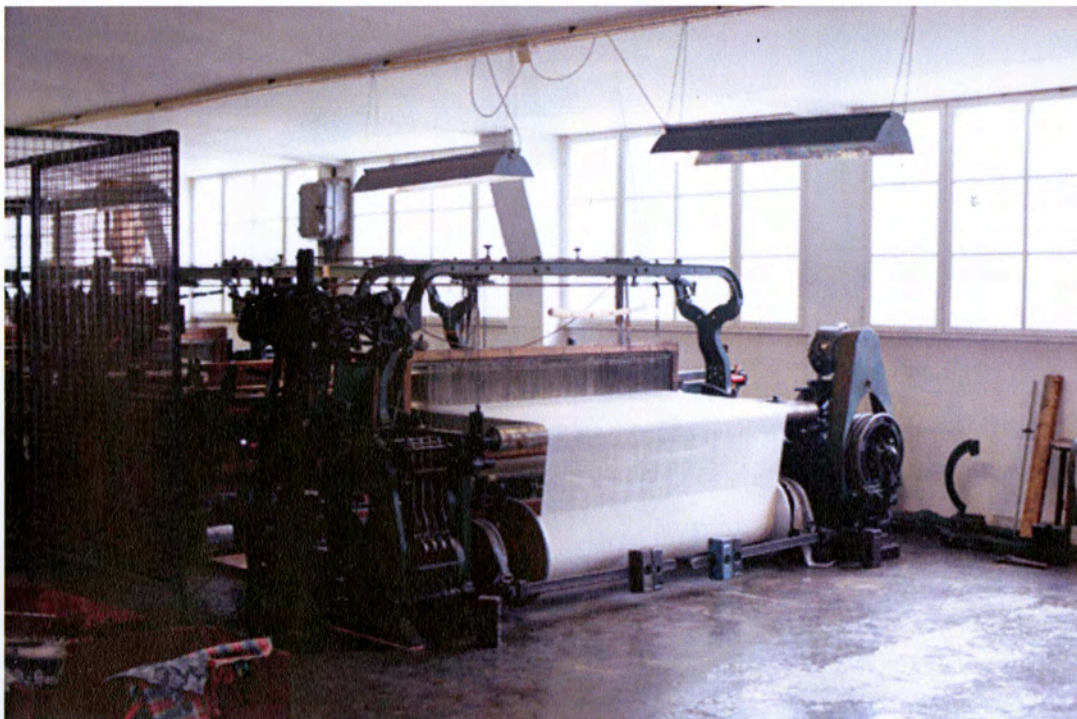
Since then, activity at Sjølingstad has been revived and kept alive partly through income from a limited production of blankets, fabrics for the Norwegian national costume and yarns, and partly as museum. Today the mill is a part of the Vest-Agder Museum and offers visitors insight into a complete production line, from the washing of raw wool, to spinning of yarn, weaving, dyeing and finishing.

Since 2012 I have worked with employees in the weaving department, especially Einar Kristensen and Gunnveig Sigurdsdatter Helland. Our common project has been to restore a loom that had not been in use since 1948, recreating one of the factory's bestsellers in the 1950s, a material for suits called 727.

The project has since its beginning been through several phases, including the analysis of samples of the original fabric, technical and mechanical work with the loom, setup of a new warp, weaving, alignment and, recently, dyeing and finishing. An essential aspect of working on this loom was to collect and challenge the knowledge of the fabric and the loom, and to develop the project through collaboration. For a long time we were not certain that we were going to reach an acceptable result. However, after extended periods of adjustment and fine-tuning of the loom, it was possible to weave lengths with a good quality fabric. The fabric was then dyed and taken through finishing processes, to achieve as good a quality as possible. I brought one length of the fabric along to the finishing department at Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill, where they have modern versions of technical equipment that was previously in use at Sjølingstad, but that has been taken out of operation a long time ago.

08 JULI 2015

The
Laurdal Loom
Sykkingsdal
Vollen Mill



08 JULI 2015

Project description
'Til Gudbrandsdalens
Uldvarefabrik'
Lillehammer Art
Museum 2013/14

Til Gudbrandsdalens Uldvarefabrik

From autumn 2012 to November 2013 I worked on a project about the history and production at Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill (GU), which is the largest remaining textile mill in Norway. The company is located at Lillehammer, just a few hundred meters from the Lillehammer Art Museum where I took part in the exhibition *A Thousand Threads* from November 2013 to May 2014.

The title of the project was *Til Gudbrandsdalens Uldvarefabrik* and it was based on my experience from the time I spent in the mill, and the production of textiles I developed. It became a portrait of a company that is both a major carrier of tradition and an innovator in Norwegian textile industry. GU generously opened their production and archives for me and I spent a lot of time in the company's workshops in dialogue with employees, to get a fundament for my work. I collected an extensive material, including photographs of workshops and the production, objects from the archive, interviews with staff members, as well as my own adaptations; textiles produced at the mill. The textiles are based on the weave patterns I found in old sample books of fabrics that have been produced by the company.

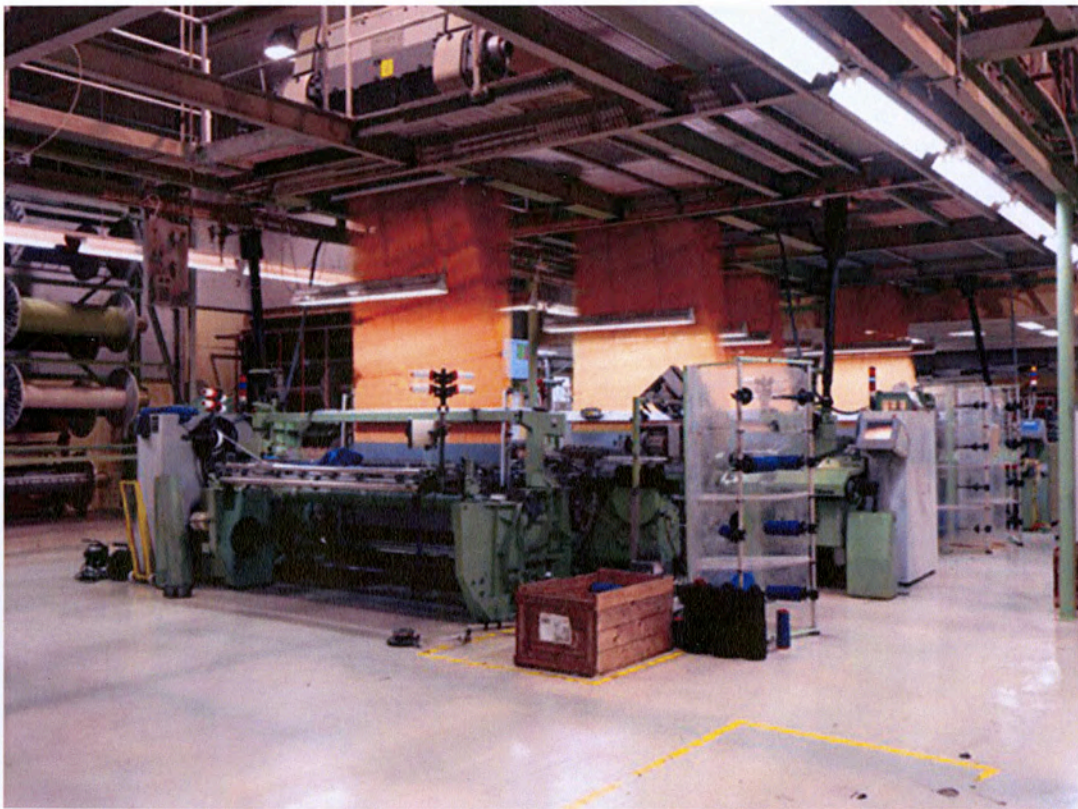
In 1887, Bernt Otto Johnsen established the company Gudbrandsdalens Uldspinneri by the river Mesna in Lillehammer. Already after eight years of operation the business expanded with a weaving department as well as dyeing and finishing facilities. The company then became a complete woollen mill, soon to be known for high its high quality products. In 1898 the mill got the name it has today, Gudbrandsdalens Uldvarefabrik (GU), and employed by the turn of the century twenty-five people, fifteen of them women. Andreas R. Svarstad bought the mill in 1912. The combination of his knowledge of textile production, and his sense of business gave a good basis for further development of the company.

Through new investments, technological development and commitment to quality, the business grew steadily through the decades, and became an important cornerstone company in Lillehammer. Even through the 1920s and 1930s, a challenging period for most manufacturing companies GU could show continuous growth, and the development of a wide range of products. The production was mainly of fabrics for clothing, but also some upholstery fabrics and other interior textiles.

Today, after 127 years, GU is one of Europe's leading manufacturers of upholstery fabrics. The company has still all production processes in-house, and the most modern technology available. Currently the mill employs seventy people, which is considerably less than the 350 it was at the most, but the volume of production has never been larger than today. Fabrics from GU is used on the seats on the Norwegian trains, cruise ships, cinemas, hotels, offices and institutions. Seventy per cent of the upholstery fabrics produced are exported. Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill is now run by the fourth generation Svarstad and plays a significant role as a carrier of tradition and knowledge about textile production and the history of the Norwegian textile industry.

08 JULI 2015

From the
weaving department
at Gudbrands -
dalens Wollen
Mll. Digital
jacquard looms



45. In the centre of my work are objects. Objects that are connected to how we live our lives, connected to everyday life. Physical objects, things. They make me remember and make me feel, and they produce knowledge. My explorations and interpretations of objects are the foundation of my work.

46. I explore objects that already exist, and some of them I use as reminders of a place, a person – perhaps a colleague – a tradition or a set of knowledge; and, as an homage to all the labour that has taken place, everything in this production that I relate to that has produced improved life quality and dignity.

47. An example is the brush brought from Sellgrens Veveri – a weaving mill in Tingvoll – that found its way into the exhibition at Oslo Kunstforening. It is meaningful to me because of where it comes from and what it has been used for, because of the residues of dust and dyestuff left in its fibres. Other objects, like the sample books, I use as entry points into a series of actions I perform, connecting the chosen object to everything that I am as a maker and to my intentions with what I do.

48. Chosen, touched, smelled, looked at: the interpretation of these objects might become a complex endeavour, involving an extensive set of parameters, knowledge and personal memories – even an awareness of preconceptions. I am interested in what the object is telling me, and I use objects in my work as suggestions, questioning what they might tell to others.

49. I am building on a negotiation between myself and the object. It generates action, it is a challenge. Sometimes it is an anchor. To understand their meaning and what they evoke is a dialogue, an exploration. Exploring the object involves understanding technologies and the different methods of production. And, of course, time: the time it takes to produce a certain product.

50. I have a deep longing for, and at the same time aversion to, the object of high quality that will last. The source of this is the experience of loss in my childhood. The conflict is also connected to the making and possession of such an object. The strong and immediate connection I felt to the buildings and workshops at Sjølingstad was in fact the connection between the objects – the textiles, which again are connected to my own desires and expectations – and the place. A series of actions generated, including skills, work and possibly a meaningful life.

51. The loops, spirals and circles of history – from an item categorised as cultural heritage, belonging in the past, to an object being a part of something happening now. Some things are forgotten because they are no longer relevant. Some things become relevant once more. Historic material, items classified as museum objects – they are taken out of time and kept to represent a certain point in history, becoming relevant again because of changes in the context of the object.

52. The work on producing the suit started with restoring a loom that Sjølingstad Woollen Mill had acquired from The Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology in Oslo, originally from Laurdal

Uldvarefabrik in Telemark. The loom is identical to looms that already existed at Sjølingstad. It has the fabrication number 184688 and was produced in 1937 at the Sächsische Webstuhlfabrik in Chemnitz, Germany. The Laurdal loom has been non-operational since 1948, and was then used to produce a heavy woollen fabric. It bore visible marks from the use of coarse wool, but otherwise it was rather well-kept.

53. Considerable time was spent on technical and mechanical work with the loom, in order to make it ready for a new warp based on an analysis of samples of the 727 fabric. This fabric is described as the best-selling article from the mill, and was in regular production from at least 1957 to 1961, probably longer. This work was made by Einar Kristensen and Paul Hasund. I participated at various stages of this phase, although my main focus was on the preparation for the new textile quality to be woven in the loom.

54. We found an original setup in the attic at the mill, with shafts, warp threads, a reed and a small section of the fabric. This setup gave me the information I needed to prepare the new warp. I found additional information in the protocols at the weaving department office. The weave pattern is a twill woven on eight shafts. For the new fabric we used a 30/2 worsted ecru wool spun at Flasa in Switzerland. We got the yarn from the nearby Mandal Veveri, as a leftover from a larger production. I experimented with using different weft yarns to get a variety of qualities, but ultimately the same yarn was used for both warp and weft in producing the fabric for the suit. There are 18 threads per cm in the warp and approximately 110 per 5 cm in the weft. The total amount of threads in the warp is 3168. The reed used is 65/10, with three threads per reed dent. The total width of the warp in the reed is 175 cm.

55. The making of the warp and preparation of the loom was done in collaboration between Einar, Gunnveig Sigurdsdatter Helland and me. For a long time we were not certain that we were going to reach an acceptable result. However, after extended periods of adjusting and fine-tuning the loom, it was possible to weave lengths with a good quality fabric.

56. The fabric was then dyed and taken through finishing processes. I piece-dyed the fabric in two colours after a longer period spent sample-dyeing to find the colours I was looking for: a classic navy blue and a clear dark green. I did the sample dyeing at the dyeing workshop at KHiO using dyes from the Lanaset series, produced by Huntsman.

57. The advantage with weaving using undyed yarns for a small-scale production such as this is that it allows for the development of a colour range. To have achieved an even better result on the dyeing, the fabric should have been woven from a yarn dyed in the desired colour rather than in ecru. This would have prevented both an uneven dye result and traces in the fabric from the washing machine and the piece-dyeing equipment at Sjølingstad. The dyeing process, which includes boiling of the fabric under constant movement, is a rather rough treatment.

58. To achieve as good a quality as possible on the finishing, I brought lengths of the fabric to the finishing department at Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill, where they have modern versions of technical equipment that was previously in use at Sjølingstad but was long ago taken out of operation. The fabric was taken through the foulard and the stenter, as well as the processes of shearing and decatizing, at the mill.

59. The fabric was finished in December 2014 and was handed over to the tailor Liv Guri Østrem. Østrem is both educated at, and has several years of work experience with, the tailoring house Huntsman on Savile Row in London, and she sews suits and coats according to classic tailoring traditions. She made the three-piece suit for me using the navy blue 727 fabric.

60. The suit is contemporary in style, but, with the use of the rather heavy and hard-wearing fabric in the classic navy blue colour, the intention was to create a suit that would appear timeless. The work that has been put into its making, and the uncompromising striving for the best quality achievable in all parts of the production, suggests that this might be the only suit a person would need. An investment for life. The Sunday suit to be worn after a week of work using a very different type of garments.

61. There is space for me to grow in the suit. I can increase the width around my waist by 10 cm and the garments can be altered. The value the object has through its uncompromising quality is a statement opposing consumer behaviour where the norm is to acquire many lower-quality pieces, rather than a few pieces of high quality. An object that can follow the consumer through life may even become a piece used by several generations.

62. The suit was the key object in the exhibition at Oslo Kunstforening, and I used it for the opening of the show. Seeing it in on the wall in the gallery, on wooden coat hangers, was like seeing my own body being exhibited. The millimetre precision in the suit, taking the shape and the irregularities of my body into consideration, creates an almost uncannily recognisable similarity, particularly in the jacket.

63. Trying it on is frictionless and sensual, like being embraced. Wearing the suit is, in one way, part of a healing process. Comforting. Even though I know that the knowledge I have of the suit is hidden, the fact that it is there empowers me. In another way it exposes my desires and struggles. It reminds me of psychological structures too personal to allow wearing it in a social context to feel unthreatening. The blue standard well-made suit can also make me feel naked and exposed.

64. I don't think I can use the suit like I would use any suit, in a wedding or at a Sunday dinner. It has too much of a symbolic value for me, and I guess I will always feel lonely wearing it, if not for occasions that reveal the complexity of the object. It needs a situation of contextualisation.

65. If I wear it walking down the street, what will it tell? I do not look like a regular businessperson, so it will probably say that I am dressing up. The suit is made for me, so it suits me well naturally,

and the fabric is of good quality, but it is not very exclusive looking. Where I am heading depends on the rest of the outfit. Shirt, tie and my shoes and belt from Edward Green: perhaps a wedding. Open shirt, more relaxed shoes, and I am on my way to a party or a family dinner at a restaurant. Shirt made by HAIK and Aurland shoes: to perform at a public defence. The suit is silent, surface, style. I know I look good wearing it, but that is about it. The rest I have to tell.

08 JULI 2015

From the
second fitting
of the suit.
With tailor
for Gavin Uddam
2015



66. I engaged in collaborations with colleagues almost at the same time I started working with textile industrial production in 2000. To include people with other skills and practices in my work follows the logic of a production line that depends on a varied set of knowledge and abilities to function successfully. The process of developing a work including other people, at different stages and with different roles, is challenging for me. But still I believe in the dynamic between collaboration and individual work as a strategy for defining both my practice and how I work. It creates energy through commitment: a sense of responsibility for obtaining what the different parties have had as an aim or a goal for being in the collaboration.

67. My experience is that the friction, the misunderstandings and the disappointments, as well as the success and common achievements, have structured the development of the collaborations. There have been dangerous situations, and at times even the threat of collapse. Handling the unforeseen and the turning points these situations have produced have been crucial moments in the process.

68. The collaborations have taken place at different levels. There are people who do things for me who have knowledge and a level of skill that I don't, such as the photographers I have worked with, or the mechanics at the weaving mills, or the tailor. Their expertise has made my work better. Another example is the design of the catalogue by the agency Research and Development in Stockholm, building on a long and extensive dialogue between us.

69. Another structure has been to invite colleagues to interpret my work and develop a reading of my material based on their practices and specialized knowledge. One example is the work Ragnhild Nordhagen at Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill did on developing a colour palette for one of the textiles I worked on. Nordhagen is a designer and her work is based on current demands in the market for fabrics for interiors. Seeing her take on the fabric I worked on made visible her knowledge and the context she works within, as opposed to my interpretations and use of colour in relation to photos of the interiors of the mill for the context of an exhibition.

70. An important part of the process has been to work on knowledge development together with staff at Sjølingstad Woollen Mill. Through discussion and dialogue we worked our way through the restoration of a loom, as well as the mechanical and preparatory work needed to be able to weave the 727 fabric. We defined different areas of responsibility, mine being the aesthetic decisions, the analysis of the fabric and most of the weaving. My colleagues at the mill focused mainly on the mechanical issues. Sharing the information and working together as much as possible was crucial to the success of the project.

71. Yet another format of collaboration is the one I have had with HAIK. HAIK is a design collective consisting of Siv Støldal, Ida Falck Øien and Harald Lunde Helgesen. We started to discuss collaboration on textile production in 2012. Since then we have worked together on two collections: the winter 2014/15 collection produced at Sjølingstad and the spring/summer 2015 collection produced at Krivi vev at Tingvoll in Møre and Romsdal.

72. Inviting HAIK to Sjølingstad marked a transition in my work, from being developed by me alone or through very defined collaborations to a more challenging setup. I introduced Sjølingstad, a place to which I have a very strong connection, to HAIK, a group of people with a common artistic vision and understanding of design. I needed the challenge to develop my material further and to look at other aspects of the field I am working within.

73. The collaboration with HAIK, which makes clothing for customers in an international market, moved my fabrics from a closed circuit between the development in the mill and display in the exhibition space into a circulation that followed the logic of development within the production and marketing of a fashion item. I gained experience from observing the shifts of the fabrics from the sampling, development of styles and shows or fairs to seeing the items in the shops and on people wearing them around town.

74. The exchange of ideas and the development of products following the structures in the fashion market made the differences of methods and processes clear to me. This includes an understanding of how the economics behind production affect both the process and the result. It has been very rewarding to develop textiles for fashion in the Norwegian weaving industry as a process both of gaining experience with and knowledge of the different fields and of understanding the work that goes into each part of the process, as well as better understanding the timelines and the costs.

75. The collaborations have also brought to the surface the confrontation between standards, ideals and concepts. My ideals of a quality textile, shaped through years of training and experience as a weaver, were challenged when HAIK wanted to work on holes in the fabrics. This led to interesting reflections on the balance between being true to a concept and the ideals of a perfect quality fabric, of course made without holes.

76. Some of the garments made from fabrics woven at Sjølingstad had holes added to them. This was a challenging process for me. The fabrics woven at Krivi vev for the spring/summer 2015 collection were woven in a jacquard loom, making it possible to introduce holes, or sections of the fabric where the weft was not introduced to the warp. This was a different process, where the hole was part of the design, and it was easier for me to take part in.

77. The experience I have when opening my practice and work is that it is challenging but very rewarding. I have had secrets. Sjølingstad Woollen Mill has been a secret. The process of working with HAIK has made me more aware and appreciative of my own knowledge and skills, and it is also a sign of the times, with people being generally more open to involving and sharing in positive and inspiring collaborations.

07 JULI 2015

Conversations with employees at Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill
Lillehammer, September 2013
F.P. Schmidt

Ivar Magne Johannesen
Production worker, weaving department

From conversations
with staff at
Gudbrandsdalens
Wollen M.TI. For
the exhibition at
Lillehammer Art
Museum 2013/14

I started working here twenty-five years ago as a technician in the weaving department. I was educated as a car mechanic, so I had the mechanical background. Although I am from Lillehammer I knew nothing about the mill, only that it was a factory below the railway line along the Mesna River. The funny thing is that I was fed up already after the first day here. I was pretty sure I wasn't going to show up for yet another day of work. But now I've been here for twenty-five years.

When I started in the mill I worked with service and maintenance. I tied new warps and got the new fabrics started, both shaft looms and jacquards. At that time we had specialists taking care of the different tasks, so we did not do the whole process ourselves. Today I am a weaver, and now we actually do everything ourselves. We remove the finished fabric, clean the loom, enter a new warp and tie it, getting a new piece going. Yes, the whole process from A to Z. It is interesting to work with weaving, because we see results. We see the patterns, we see it becoming a fabric.

I thought at the time I started that working with textiles must be very boring stuff. But then I realized that it is a very interesting field. I took a certificate of completed apprenticeship maybe ten or twelve years after I started. Often you learn only what you need to be able to do the job, but with the certificate I could both widen and deepen my knowledge. Then it became even more interesting. I learned about finishing, dyeing, spinning, winding. Worsted and woollens. We used the teaching program Frode Svarstad created, and the teacher was a master weaver from Landheim Weaving Mill: Abrahamsen, a textile engineer educated in Germany. He was very skilful - really of the old school.

The modern technology means that we produce more today than we did before. Once there were over 300 employees here, and the schedule had three shifts. When I started in 1988 there were around 190 employees. Now we are 70, but we produce more and better quality today, with modern machines that take care of themselves. Before we produced for stock. Today we deliver directly to the customer by order.

The most interesting thing with this mill is that we do the whole process here at this location. The fleece enters at one end and a finished fabric leaves the mill at the other. It is not like that in other mills any more, where they perhaps buy finished yarn or just make yarn. We control the entire production, and with that in mind one understands why the products we make cost as much as they do, when you see all the work in all the departments.

We had an open day here last year. We celebrated an anniversary, and then a lot of people came to see what we are doing. There were neighbours who had only seen the factory from the outside, and when they saw from the inside what we make, they were very surprised. We got a lot of feedback that people thought it was interesting to see that we make upholstery. They perhaps began to think about what furniture they had at home. This was on a Saturday morning with terrific weather and we were surprised at how many people came. We thought that it might be about thirty to fifty people; there were a lot more.

I am a little proud that I work in this mill, yes. I am. We see fabrics we have produced all over the place. On the railways, on boats. Watching TV, you may suddenly see a presenter sitting on a chair ... Wow, it was Rypdal, it was Rypdal [one of fabrics that GU produces]. Then you can just imagine, that, yes, maybe I have created that fabric. We are proud of what we make. Thinking about all the cruise boats we have delivered to, and all the cinemas. A friend of mine was on a ferry not long ago, and he said that it was a nice boat, beautiful fabrics and, yes, nice. And then he wondered if I had been on that ferry. No, I said, I have not, but I've been making the fabrics. So I know how it looks. Wow, he said.

Åge Jenssveen

Production manager

I started in May 1976, almost forty years ago. I began with carding and spinning, and after that I have taken on more and more responsibility. When I was head of the spinning department Andreas Svarstad, who was manager at the time, wanted me to take more education. He suggested that I should study to become an engineer, so I did. I had leave for three years and I studied mechanical engineering, at first on production and then more specifically on textiles and clothing. Seventy per cent was covered by the mill and I had to contribute thirty per cent myself, to risk something. When I returned here I was head of a department for several years, and since 2007 I have been the production manager.

I am responsible for planning the structure for following up orders from customers, for staff in all departments and for all the machines, including the operation and maintenance of production equipment. In addition, I support the heads of the departments, helping them to find the best solutions for them to get the job done. And then I am responsible for ordering all the raw materials we use. That takes a lot of my time.

It's part of my job to be aware of development and to foresee the need for knowledge, to make sure we always have the skills we need. Many heads of departments have their experience from moving up in the system through time, after having started in production. But we also have some with key expertise. As an example, in the weaving department we have a trained weaving technician from Germany. He has built on his experience by working here and is today a textile mechanic. GU has to educate people. It is crucial.

It is a very vulnerable situation, because here in Norway there are no schools educating people for jobs in the textile industry. Then you have to look to Germany or England. This becomes obvious when we look for weaving technicians. It is impossible to find people, so we must take good care of those we have. Therefore it is important to transfer knowledge to the young people coming in. It is a continuous process, and new staff must learn from a master in the department. For this to happen you need to have a desire to learn. The people we train must really want it. Otherwise it won't work. We also set aside both time and funding to send candidates on courses and training, often organized by dye or machine suppliers. There is no one in Norway who takes an education in textile manufacturing without having something to come back to. The market in Norway is very small.

Today the machines we use are, to a large extent, automatic. Each machine is like a small computer, which makes troubleshooting difficult. But on the other hand we have a more efficient operation now. It is not so time consuming. Thirty years back we employed about two hundred people. Now we are down to seventy people, so the ability to keep up, technology-wise, allows us to survive. The owners of the factory have never taken out the profit gains. They have brought it back to the company as new investments. Imagine if we still used old looms or dyeing equipment, it would have been a heavy load to carry for the business to renew all this machinery at the same time. In this regard the management has been visionary, and has invested in new technology every year.

The uniqueness of GU is that we are what we call one hundred per cent vertically integrated, in that we have all the processes here on site. We're almost three factories in one. Many companies are specialized, but we do everything here and have complete control of the whole process. This creates flexibility. And it is certainly a strength, when designers are working with architects who want a special item, that we are able to make it here. Then we are not dependent on someone else. The management has become more and more aware of this situation in recent years. We see that it is a strength that we are soon to be the only mill in the world that has the whole production line in one building.

Ragnhild Nordhagen

Textile designer

I work in the design department and I have been at GU since June of this year. I design upholstery fabrics and create weave patterns for new products, as well as assisting external designers with design, construction and sample weaving. I have a master's in textile design from the Swedish School of Textiles in Borås, and I started my textile education with a bachelor's in Art and Design, with two years specializing in design and weaving at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences.

It all began with a strong interest in historical costumes when I was a child, and a growing fascination for detail in textiles and fashion garments. I learned to weave at a folk high school in Sandefjord, and I quickly realized that this was a form of expression that suited me well. It has something to do with the fact that it is a medium suited for almost unlimited experimentation. By using your knowledge of weave patterns, and by combining different materials, you can create surprising textures, structures and motifs. Textiles are something we take for granted in many ways, as part of a garment or piece of furniture. But at the same time the qualities of a textile are immensely appreciated, such as through its tactility or shine, as an example. I am concerned about how to use textiles in new ways and how to create new functions. I explored this in my master's project where I developed a concept for space dividers for airports based on woven fabrics.

There is a lot of knowledge in the various departments at GU, and as a newcomer I've had the chance to learn a lot about all the processes in the house. The company has invested heavily in new and more efficient production machinery in several departments over the last few years. This enables the mill both to withstand the pressure the textile industry is facing today and to maintain and transfer its knowledge of textile production. There is something amazing about being able to look back on such a long textile history. I really feel that this is present here at the factory. When I stand in the weaving department surrounded by my colleagues and the looms, it is really nice to look around, knowing that we are part of an unbroken line of industrial history. There is no education exclusively on textile production in Norway today, and therefore it feels particularly important that this knowledge is maintained at GU.

I believe that tradition and innovation often go hand in hand. One is probably never completely detached from history and tradition; you have references and experience as a base for innovation. Modern design often refers consciously to historic forms of expression and colour palettes. But innovation could also be motivated by a desire to break with the past, with what you see as traditional or established, thus creating a more radical design. Anyway, I don't think it's possible to ignore the influence of or the relationship between history, tradition and innovation. I believe that in order to be innovative in textile design one has to look towards what is happening within other disciplines, such as architecture, product design, fashion and art. Understanding the mechanisms of innovation in related fields can give valuable input to your own area. It is also important to keep up with the development of new materials, which can influence the design process of innovative textiles. To maintain the knowledge of all aspects of textile production is equally important. There is a growing interest in handcrafted and unique expressions. In this regard, knowledge of the craft of weaving and pattern construction still influences exciting and modern design expression, perhaps in a different way than what is possible through the use of design software.

The textile industry in Norway is small, and textile design is a rather narrow field. Nevertheless, I think that the opportunities are good for me to work in the textile industry in this country for a long time. I believe that this part of the Norwegian industry has great potential through focusing on innovative and distinctive designs, as well as exciting collaborations.

07 JULI 2015

Conversation with
staff at Sjølingstad
Wollen M.H.
Reflection on the
J27 production for
the exhibition at
Oslo Kunstforening
2015.

Conversation with Gunnveig Sigurdsdatter Helland and Einar Kristensen
Sjølingstad Woollen Mill, November 2014
F.P. Schmidt

On background and training

Gunnveig:

I started in August 1992. So, some years have passed now. Håkon Ås and Karl Orre were the two first people I met when I came here. I started in the weaving department. I did some spinning too, to try it out. But I liked it best here, so here I stayed. Before I started at the mill, I took three years of vocational school and worked a year at a factory in Mandal, manufacturing carpets.

I learned from Håkon, and from observing him and Orre, but also a lot from trying things on my own. It went very smoothly. I was, like, just being around all the time. I remember that Orre instructed me on one of the first looms over there. He went back and forth, and if I stopped the loom he said, "Who stopped the loom now?" Sometimes he could say, "That was nice!" And then he just walked on. I remember it clearly. He just sort of wandered around. He was not, like, hanging over me at all. No, he just listened to the sound, the rhythm of the machines. I thought it was a little funny. I don't know how long Orre had worked here; he had somehow always been around. He made the wonderful patterns for the jacquard here in the workshop. I asked him about them once, and he said that they were made here.

In the beginning I wove cloth and fire blankets. It was basically much the same as we do now. And a lot of the chequered McDonald blankets. We fringed them by hand before we got a fringing machine. We did the work in inspection and repair room using a nail. It was fun. I worked there too, and I continued doing some spinning.

In October 2011, Einar and I got a certificate of completed apprenticeship. It made a real difference. Some things you have done so many times that you do it without thinking, out of habit. But now we had to gather the knowledge in our heads, and then show what we were able to do. We felt that it was a real accomplishment when we passed the test. After we got the certificate, we took more responsibility. It is about evolving and becoming more confident. Then you take more responsibility for the things you do. Before, I sort of just worked here without really engaging. But now, I work with both body and soul, and everything. That's what we do, Einar, don't we?

Einar:

I came in November 2002 after having worked many years in prosthetics, that is, the manufacture of artificial limbs. We had a workshop in Kristiansand and, yes, it was a real craft profession. We used different materials: textile, plastic, metal. I had a certificate in the production of prosthetic arms but moved into working with both arms and legs. Actually I am a machine technician and a tool mechanic, but my certificate is as an orthopaedic technician. After a few years here at

Sjølingstad I took a certificate in spinning too, after training at both Hillesvåg and Gudbrandsdalen Woollen Mill [GU].

I began weaving in 2007 after a break when I worked in a shipyard for a year. A few months after that, we started a one-year training program with Johan Dal, with funding from the Norwegian Crafts Institute. At a time when we were fighting to keep the knowledge alive this was a real boost for documentation and for knowledge on the use of the equipment. Johan had worked at GU as a technician. He was retired when he came to us. Gunnveig had good knowledge on weaving, which I did not. We complemented each other as best we could. I tightened screws and Gunnveig did the weaving. Now we were in a way crossing lines: I would learn to weave and she would learn mechanics. The year with Johan we finished by writing a manual to get documentation of the settings and use of the looms. We had actually promised that this would be the document that proved our understanding of what we were doing. Building on this experience we got the certificate two years afterwards. We went through with this in 2011.

Preparations to take the certificate were essentially through self study. And we collaborated with Mandal Weaving Mill. Erik, in the weaving department down there, had acquired some books for us that we read on our own. And then we read some of the books by Frode Svarstad, and we were in contact with him at GU. We had a written plan on the theoretical side: we should go through the production line from spinning yarns to finished goods. We looked at existing spinning methods, the warp making and how to prepare the loom.

On machines and equipment

Einar:

We weave using old shaft power looms from the 1930s and 1940s. I would think that the construction could be dated almost a hundred years back, maybe even earlier than that. Some were bought used, some were new, but the construction is old. Sjølingstad continued to produce on these looms, and that is probably one of the reasons why it went out of business. Neither the opportunity nor the willingness to replace the machines was apparent. They saw the negative signs in the market and did not invest in any new equipment. They would have had to modernize the whole production line. It was too old. A part of the problem as well was probably that the new generation in the Hoven family was not prepared to continue the business, and regular production at Sjølingstad ended in 1984. Today we get funds from Directorate of Cultural Heritage to keep the machines running and to maintain the production knowledge.

Gunnveig:

We operate like a living museum, and the main thing is to preserve. But we need to produce something to preserve, particularly with the looms and machines. In this way we can show future generations how it was in earlier times. But every so often parts fall from the looms. Then we must

use spare parts or find other good solutions to get the looms up and running again. We have some spare parts.

Einar:

Yes, our goal is that when something goes wrong it will be repaired. Another motivation is that all those looms that are complete and technically capable of being used will eventually be put into use, producing a material that is connected to our history. It is, as Gunnveig says, important that we have an understanding of what we weave and that we try to make the woven fabrics similar to what has been produced here before. That is our motivation.

On 727

Einar:

In the last two years we have restored a loom that has not been used since 1948, and we are doing a reconstruction on it. It has been very interesting for us to see that it is possible to assemble a machine from scratch, getting an understanding of how a loom should be put to work.

Gunnveig:

I guess you know about this, Franz? You could probably write a book on that loom? It has been very interesting to work on this project. Exciting too. I've been wondering ... will it work, will it? And are we able to pull through? Yes, I have. It has kept us awake for several nights, we've been thinking, why does the loom stop, why doesn't it work? But it is always like that with Einar and me. We are not able to let go of work at home.

Einar:

What I say now is not to tear down how the relationship between us has been. Because I feel, at least from my side, that this relationship has grown gradually on this project. However, it has been challenging, I must say! And it has sometimes kept me awake at night when I have been making plans on how to solve problems we've had. If we had been even more focused when we started this project, we would probably have reached our goals earlier. But it is a complex thing. What I would have liked to do differently was not to start on as ambitious a level as we did. It would have been better to get the loom going with a more regular and ordinary quality, a different weft yarn, to get rid of errors before we started with the 727-quality.

I felt I perhaps failed to meet your expectations because I was not completely confident using the machine. An example is those times you have been here without really being able to produce what you wanted. Perhaps that could have been avoided. There were too many situations where we hoped and believed instead of knowing. The loom needed time to get going, and so did we, of course, to learn and to see the signals.

Gunnveig:

Yes, but it's not easy to see this in advance. It was a machine in several parts, you cannot expect anything else, and it was in bits and pieces when we started working on it. We were supposed to put it together and get it going. We never had the thought that it would not work. We've known all along that we would make it. I have believed in this all along.

Einar:

Franz, I hope you understand that we are very pleased that you have spent so much time on us, and pushed us forward. If you had not been here I don't think that we would have come to where we are today, neither for motivation nor knowledge. And I guess we can say that we still have a long way to go. But you have motivated us, and you have believed in us and in our ability to achieve something together. And I can say, and I think that you know this too, that the managers both here and in Kristiansand appreciate that you are here. And you give a lot back, both knowledge and self-esteem. It means a lot.

On knowledge

Einar:

Now Gunnveig has been working here for plus or minus twenty years. We have to make sure that her knowledge will be kept alive, let's say twenty years into the future. We should have a plan for the time that lies ahead. How do we want Sjølingstad to look in ten or twenty years?

It is a question of education, and we must enable the employees that will work here after us to learn everything we know. I am really not sure how this should be done. For quite some time now my intention has been to write a curriculum. This is something we lack in all departments here at the mill. If someone quits, how do we convey their knowledge to future workers? We must ask ourselves what we want the ones who will continue running the mill to know, and create a system that makes it clear that they have achieved the right level of knowledge. I would really like to write curricula now before we hire someone new.

Gunnveig:

Sometimes we hope that it will be solved easily; other times we lose faith. We may get an apprentice, an intern who really wants to be here. It is important to have mechanical insight. It doesn't have to be a modern mechanic, but insight into the mechanics is very important because otherwise the looms will not work for long.

Einar:

There must also be a willingness to create textiles. Otherwise it will all be in vain, even if the level of mechanical understanding is ever so high. The one who comes must have a willingness to take an interest in both mechanics and textiles. Therefore, we must emphasize that we have two different

cultures here, some who think textiles and some who think management, and they have to communicate as well as possible.

Gunnveig:

There must be both, to create something new and to take care of the heritage. But we can't expect that someone who has been studying at the Academy in Oslo will move down here ... can we?

Einar:

It is very important that someone has the motivation to keep Sjølingstad at a high level. It can be very exciting. We realize that what you have done, moving fabrics from the archive to production, also provides an understanding of authenticity. We can build on the fabrics that have been made here before, and not just create new qualities without this historic link. But to recreate based on what has been, we should probably activate the archive. Do something about it.

HAiK W/ FRANZ W/ SJØLINGSTAD ULDVAREFABRIK

Artist Franz Schmidt and design collective HAIK have worked at Sjølingstad Uldvarefabrik, developing wool qualities for the HAIK, winter 2014 collection. They started from a standard white fabric the factory produces regularly, a wool twill on wool weft traditionally used for outer wear and nowadays mostly used in Norwegian national costume. Together with technical experts at Sjølingstad, Einar and Gunnveig, they were able to explore and develop qualities from this fabric. New textiles were made in a variety of textures and colours. Practically all the machines in the workshops at Sjølingstad were used in production of the woollen fabrics. This includes the looms in the weaving workshop, the dyeing equipment and several machines for finishings. (Find details on this in the exhibition list of works). For the design of the clothes Franz and HAIK went hunting in the factory locker room and found worn out work wear used at Sjølingstad and made patterns for various garments based on these, then they re-made them in the very fabric that the machines they were worn around produces. There is a feeling of a circle completed. A story of usage, function and reason of a garment emerges and keeps developing as it travels into the world in its new found shape.

While visiting Sjølingstad in July 2013, HAIK was in the middle of an ongoing research process about repair of clothing, under the project title Keep it. They were looking at how the industrial meets the human touch, specifically in clothing, such as in darnings, patchings and alterations for longevity. The Sjølingstad visit further inspired and fueled conversations between Franz and HAIK. In the old workwear at the factory they found the task specific wear and tear to be connected directly to the body, manual labour with its repetitive operations at the mill. An obvious insight perhaps, but only experienced by HAIK fully after a week of training with Franz at the looms. With Franz being an expert at the Sjølingstad machines he shared his hands-on approach to fabrics. Through working at the factory the connection between manual labor and self-help appeared – confirming the work and research already done by HAIK on the topic and leading to a strengthening of the collaboration.

In the year long process Sjølingstad provided the weaving facilities and the expertise. They generously opened the factory doors to the visitors, HAIK and Franz. Franz holds a unique position in the textile field with his production experience combined with his artistic approach and sensitivity. He has a background of working at Sjølingstad wool mill and has been the main link between the production and the visiting designers. Franz shared his knowledge of fabric construction as an expert weaver and developed the color palette. HAIK brought their unique approach to clothing and the design process including on site workshopping – developing by participation. Coming in as an outsider with limited knowledge of the full weaving process opened up for happy accidents. Through the HAIK network and connection to the international fashion scene the products are brought into a far reaching context, with the collection being sold in countries like Japan, China and USA. In the HAIK w/ Franz w/ Sjølingstad Uldvarefabrik collaboration, production, knowledge and new ideas came together to form a new and higher entity - all parts dependent on each other to create a whole.

Text written by
Ida Falck Öien
about our collabo-
ration at Sjølingstad
The text was a
part of the
exhibition we made
at Sjølingstad
2014

HAiK

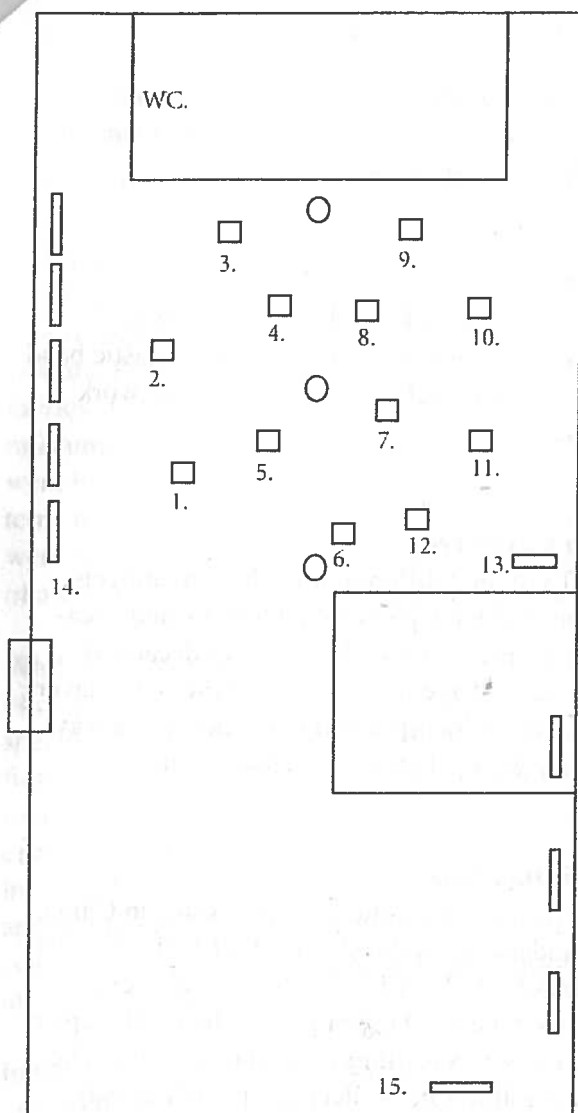
HAiK is a Norwegian clothing brand created in 2011 by the designers Siv Stødal, Ida Falck Oien and Harald Lunde Helgesen. They were brought together by their shared interest for the social meaning of clothes and appearance. With a fascination for people's personal and collective dress references, they research different approaches to clothing, dress codes, do's and don't's. Together they create multifaceted bodies of work, revolving around a chosen subject matter. HAiK means to hitch hike in Norwegian and the brand operates as a collaborative platform inviting people from a potentially wide range of working fields – so far including artists, writers, anthropologists, other established brands, manufacturers and designers. HAiK products are sold in among other places Beijing, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Bergen and Oslo.

Franz Petter Schmidt

Franz Petter Schmidt is a men's tailor and a textile artist. He lives and works in Oslo, and is currently Research Fellow in the Norwegian Artistic Research Fellowship Program at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Department of Visual Art. His practice is multifaceted, and emphasizes the understanding of production and craftsmanship. Schmidt is deeply engaged in research on the history of the Norwegian textile industry, and he is particularly interested in the production of fabrics for clothing in woollen mills. His research recently brought him back to Sjølingstad Uldvarefabrik where he worked as the head of the dyeing and finishing section for almost two years from 2000.

Sjølingstad Uldvarefabrik

A/S Sjølingstad Uldvarefabrik began operations in 1894 with production of yarn and woven fabrics, until regular production ended 1984. It re-emerged in the late 80s as a working mill and a museum factory. The spirit of days gone by still linger in these buildings where the whole production process from raw wool to finished fabrics is presented to the public. Being a living museum factory Sjølingstad contains and restores machinery and keeps knowledge of production tools and manufacturing alive for the present and the future. It plays today an important role in communicating industrial history and bears a great potential for further exploration of this field. This is a unique resource for both the general public and for the national and international textile area of expertise.



LIST OF WORKS

1.

Overall Trouser.

Wool Twill, dyed black and sewn.
The cut is taken from a pair of overalls found at Sjølingstad.

2.

Sunday Jacket

Wool Twill, washed, sewn, scissor slashed and dyed navy.
The name of the jacket suggests a day off from work to parade your Sunday best.

Easy Pants

Cotton Twill in blue.
A simple fabric to contrast the fine tuned and considered qualities of the Sjølingstad fabrics. The usage of store bought fabrics of lesser refinement highlights the Sjølingstad-made fabrics by contrast.

3.

Hand Knit Darn it Sweater

Wool yarn in black and navy from Dale Garn AS. The hand knitted monochrome pattern is inspired by darns found in old woollen garments, like socks during the general HAIK repair research period. Darnings are like new small weavings in a garment Here as knitting, two worlds of traditional woollen fabrics meet – knits and wovens.

Threadbare Scarf

Wool Twill, washed, scissor slashed and dyed navy. A ready worn scarf. A strip of the Large Shawl.

4.

Overall Short Jacket

Wool Twill dyed black in two finishing treatments. Front and back parts are brushed/raised and sleeves are not.
The cut of the garment is a recreated top part of the overalls found at Sjølingstad. Cut below the waist-band the overalls become a jacket.

5.

Sunday Jacket

Wool Twill, loomstate material.
Made to be worn in by its owner, never dyed and with the smell of sheep intact. This is the closest you get to the process at the mill in a garment. With this jacket you can participate and keep adding to the HAIK w/ Franz w/ Sjølingstad story yourself by wear, tear and washes.

Easy Pants

Cotton Plain Weave in Orange.
A simple fabric to contrast the considered qualities of the Sjølingstad fabrics. The usage of store bought fabrics of lesser refinement highlights the Sjølingstad-made fabrics by contrast.

Threadbare Scarf

Wool Twill, washed, scissor slashed and dyed orange.
A ready worn scarf. A strip of the Large Shawl.

6.

Factory Owner

Wool Twill fullled, washed, raised, sewn and dyed workmans blue.
A mens blazer made to fit the factory owner or anyone dreaming of being a factory owner in their own way.

Overall Trousers, Denim with Healing Patches.

This version of the overall trousers is made in denim - one of the most cherished and world wide popular fabrics. Denim is not unproblematic as a much of the denim production on a world basis is made compromising the health and environment of people. Using denim in the collection highlights the Sjølingstad-made fabrics by contrast. Two very different types of cloth industry touches.

The patches are from paintings made in a collaborative experiment between HAIK and social anthropologist Charlotte Bik Bandlien during a residency based exhibition in Chicago in the autumn of 2013. Together Bandlien and HAIK underwent healing treatments and then painted their experiences. These paintings became the prints of the AW14 collection as a continuous print and shown here as single motives.

7.

Warehouse Coat

Wool Twill, washed, dyed black, raised on one side of fabric and sewn with raised side out.

This is a reproduction of a coat found in Sjølingstad by Franz and HAIK during their first visit.

The original found garment has the factory name Sjølingstad Uldvarefabrik printed on its back and is estimated to be from the mid 1960s.

8.

Square Knit Jumper

Lambs wool from Schoeller Wool.

Machine knitted in Lithuania.

The knit pattern is based on darnings, with their beautiful reconstructions of what was before worn away. The pattern is made up of pearl and knit effect, creating textures like basket weave.

Large Shawl

Wool Twill, washed, scissor slashed and boiled. One square of fabric off the loom, treated with scissors to create a ready made worn out blanket or throw. The ready-worn garment is a thought provoking item. It seems to say something about our yearning for the authentic. In this case we are decorating with holes. During the washing and dyeing the holes are fixated. We use this technique with a sense of wonder in our chasing of the beauty of well worn garments.

9.

Large Shawl

Wool Twill, scissor slashed and dyed orange.

The color references work wear orange found in overalls at the Sjølingstad factory.

10.

Culotte

Wool Twill, washed, dyed black and sewn.

Pant skirt in black wool with synthetic elastic band at waist. A practical skirt in keeping with work wear needs.

11.

Apron Cover Tee

Wool Twill, in 2 different finishing treatments - the front and back parts fulled heavily and decatized, the sleeves fulled less and not decatized.

A big t-shirt shape to be worn as a dress or a layer, with an apron incorporated in the design - always ready for work whether at work or home.

12.

Keep it Bandana

Silk screen printed cotton in blue. Made in China. The bandana holds the slogans KEEP IT - DARN IT - TAKE IT IN - LET IT OUT which were introduced during the first part of the HAIK repair collection series starting with summer 2013. The bandana follows the collections the whole way through summer 2015.

Patch Up Aurlandskoen Mini Loafer Bag

Black leather with patches. Made by the shoe factory in Aurland, Norway.

HAIK collaborates with Aurland shoe factory.

Their new little loafer bag got a patch treatment so you will be ready to wear it out and not wear it out.

13.

The HAIK Winter 2014 fashion show as documented and edited by Remi Aure Reksten.

14.

Photography by Thomas Ekstrøm

15.

Photography by Anne V. Erichsen

Hair and makeup by Karen Elieson

All shoes by HAIK w/ Aurlandskoen

08 JULI 2015

From the
H&M w/F&M
Winter 2014/15
Collection



78. Structure is about method, process and reflection. Structuring is the part of the process of editing and interacting with the material that occurs at different stages of the development of a work. For me, structure is needed in order to reflect and to bring the work forward in the direction I want it to go, and it involves the editing of the material before exposing it to the public.

79. The first phase of developing a work entails orientation, observation and the registration of my attraction and fascination. Then I make a number of decisions, to some extent based on intuition, and I remain in an open production phase for a long time. This is a time to explore and orient myself in the material, and it involves, among many things, long processes of experimentation and production in the workshops. This part of the research is absorbing, demanding and open.

80. The criteria of the editing decide what to include and what to exclude to be able to read and reflect upon the material I work on and the experiments I have put into motion. These criteria change depending on where in the process I am and according to where I want the material to develop, the final framing of it as part of a catalogue or an exhibition.

81. It is a balancing act. All these choices – to sort the meaning and significance of all the elements, to understand the material, to delimit, adapt formats, identify who will be reading the story – are challenging. It requires courage. I need to remain mentally present throughout this process in order to sustain the material's vitality, to conjure the history but simultaneously show that it's me who is behind all the editing. I tend to leave as much as possible open for as long as possible. Still, I am aware of the need to take the material I gather and produce readable formats of it for others and myself at a later stage in the process.

82. During the production process of *Weaving Fabrics for Suits* I developed two methods for registering the development of the work. One of the first things I did as a fellow was to buy a date stamp, and I started collecting bits and pieces of printed matter that were in some way or another connected to the process. I stamped the objects with the date, put them in cellophane pockets and filed them in folders. From time to time I did this, and I now have one folder for each year in the programme.

83. I have developed a chronological list of all the travels and other activities that have taken place during my time in the programme. In one document the activities are categorised as either industrial history or cultural history: mills and museums, textile production, contextualization or reflection and writing. I produced extensive folders of samples, both of weave patterns, yarns, fabrics and dyes, and of texts and photos connected to each experiment.

84. The parallel production of building an archive of elements as part of the process is a method of making my actions visible. It has to do with the pride I put into being the craftsperson. I have in-depth knowledge in a specific field, and I am systematic and organised. I make the folders into aesthetic objects, which are both a tool and a monument of my labour. They link my work to a specific time. When I work on, as an example, sample dyeing, I use dyestuff that is currently in

production. In twenty years this will probably have changed. My samples and recipes will no longer be useful objects, but historic documents.

85. I put pride into this, and considerable time. It is also a way to remember, to keep something alive, and the documents might bridge moments in time, places, people and works. The colour grey I developed as an interpretation of the concrete walls at Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill is now a part of the colour range of the coming HAIK winter collection. What is a sample or a part of a process in one context might become a result in another. It is both a network of actions and the materialisation of an idea or concept.

86. The movements between building this archive as part of the process, and the actual goal I have with the work, are crucial to where the process takes me. When exposing my work, the process cannot be separated from its outcome. At times I think I actually communicate more clearly, through my process archive than through what might be categorised as final results. Making knowledge and experience visible, making the transitions visible, making the value both of my own and of others' labour visible. I am linking my archive of samples and documents to colleagues among craftspeople. The archives of others are my sources. I respond to and honour their efforts, as well as the everyday, the logic and the knowledge.

87. There is, in a way, a connection to the logic of developing a textile: there is a set of components that has to be connected in the right way to create a solid structure, carrying a level of quality that makes it able to communicate. Production line and quality control, with a shared set of standards. It is an analogue to an industrial production line developing a quality product with a story to tell and relevance for the future.

88. Towards the end of the process the structuring includes experiments on shaping the elements into text and image for the catalogue, documents from archives and textiles and garments made during the period, as well as photographic material for the exhibition. I chose one structure or narrative for the catalogue following my approach to, reading of and production at Sjølingstad, and another for the exhibition, where the three rooms in the gallery opened for a focus on the archive, or ruin in the first room, the suit in the second room and the process in the third.

89. I see the framing, such as choosing a white cube gallery for the exhibition, the format of the exhibition and the production of a catalogue, as an experiment on the relevance and value of the included objects, texts and images. The movement between spaces and the formats of presenting the work have been part of a process of negotiation, and to me there are no definite answers.

90. During the research period I looked into several alternatives for the exposition of my work. At one point I thought of leaving the original idea of producing an exhibition altogether, thinking instead of making a printed publication. At another time I thought about making a pop-up store with fabrics and garments.

91. I returned to the idea of presenting the material I have developed as an exhibition because I wanted to create an intimate and sensual presentation of the material I have worked with, including more than excluding. I have not left the idea of working on a book, but for this context I wanted to produce an exhibition at a venue in Oslo. In addition to looking at white cube galleries, I was in touch with the Design and Architecture Centre (DogA) and the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, and I also thought of the mill at Prinds Augusts Minde as a possible exhibition space.

92. These spaces offer various degrees of friction or resistance to my work. At Prinds Augusts Minde I felt that my material would become invisible, while at DogA the design context would be too strong and at the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design the historic aspect would disturb the contemporary elements of the work.

93. I eventually decided on the white cube gallery space because after thorough consideration I found that the white cube would offer the most multi-faceted reading of the work, making visible the aspects I have been most interested in discussing within the framework of the research programme – not to secure myself and my work but to expose it.

07 JULI 2015

Selection of
pages from the
'project activity'
document. All
activities during
the process recorded
2011 - 2015

- One selection of black and one of raw white with different finishes

14.02. – 19.02. 2014. HAIK production

- Piece dyeing at KHiO
- Sewing and finishing garments for the collection

27.02. – 03.03. 2014. Paris with HAIK

- Presenting the AW 2015 collection at Capsule showroom during Paris fashion week

12.03. 2014. HAIK show

- Kunstneres Hus, Oslo

09.06. – 14.06. 2014. Sjølingstad

- At Sjølingstad with HAIK
- Photo with Märta Thisner of the mill, and of the SS 2015 collection at the mill
- Exhibition with samples from HAIK AW 2014 collection

Til Gudbrandsdalens Uldvarefabrik

12.09. 2012. Lillehammer

- Meeting with Cecilie Skeide at Lillehammer Museum about participation in textile exhibition in November 2013
- Visit at Cultural History Museum Maihaugen, discussions on collaboration with the museum about the exhibition
- Meeting with Frode Svarstad the owner and head of marketing of Gudbrandsdalens Uldvarefabrik (GU) about cooperation on the development of textiles and the use of archival material for the exhibition

15.10. 2012. Lillehammer

- Further meeting with Svarstad at GU
- Exploration of archival material from GU at Maihaugen

19.11 - 23.11. 2012. Lillehammer

- Five-day participation in production in all departments of GU
- Test production of jacquard fabrics
- Meetings with the museum
- Meetings between the museum and Svarstad including a factory tour
- Shorter visits to GU archive Maihaugen

14.01. – 15.01. 2013. Lillehammer

- Production of the first samples in jacquard loom with 4200 ends. 25 meters, and finishing using Küster wash and dekatür.

- Pia Bjørnstad converted the files and I used a selection of weaves from Franz Donat and experimenting with different weft yarns

12.03. – 15. 03. 2013. Lillehammer

- Sample weaving using patterns from archive
- Meeting with staff at the museum
- Research in archive
- Patterns/colours/buildings

30.04. 2013. Lillehammer

- Sample weaving

06.06. – 07.06. 2013. Lillehammer

- Sample weaving
- Meetings at the museum

12.09. 2013. Lillehammer

- Interviews with staff at the mill
- Sample weaving
- Meeting with production assistant at GU Ragnhild Nordhagen

18.09 – 20.09. 2013. Lillehammer

- Delivering dyed yarn for fabrics to Ragnhild Nordhagen
- Interviews with staff at the mill
- Photo of the mill with Fin Serck-Hanssen

21.10. – 25.10. 2013. Lillehammer

- Final production of textiles, weaving and finishing
- Selecting the archive material to be used in the exhibition

17.11. – 23.11. 2013. Lillehammer

- Transport from Oslo of material for the exhibition
- Display in museum, textile, photos, archive materials, texts and documentation from process
- Exhibition opening 23.11.

HAIK W/Franz W/Krivi

18.05. – 20.05. 2014. Krivi Tingvoll

- HAIK production of textiles for the SS2015 collection
- Assisted by Jon Pettersen

Färgning 01 NOV. 2014

Grön 5.

utgångspunkt: Grön 3 (provok # 44. Färg # 811)

40 g. vatten

2.5 % Grön 6 1 g.

1 % Grön 6 0.4 g.

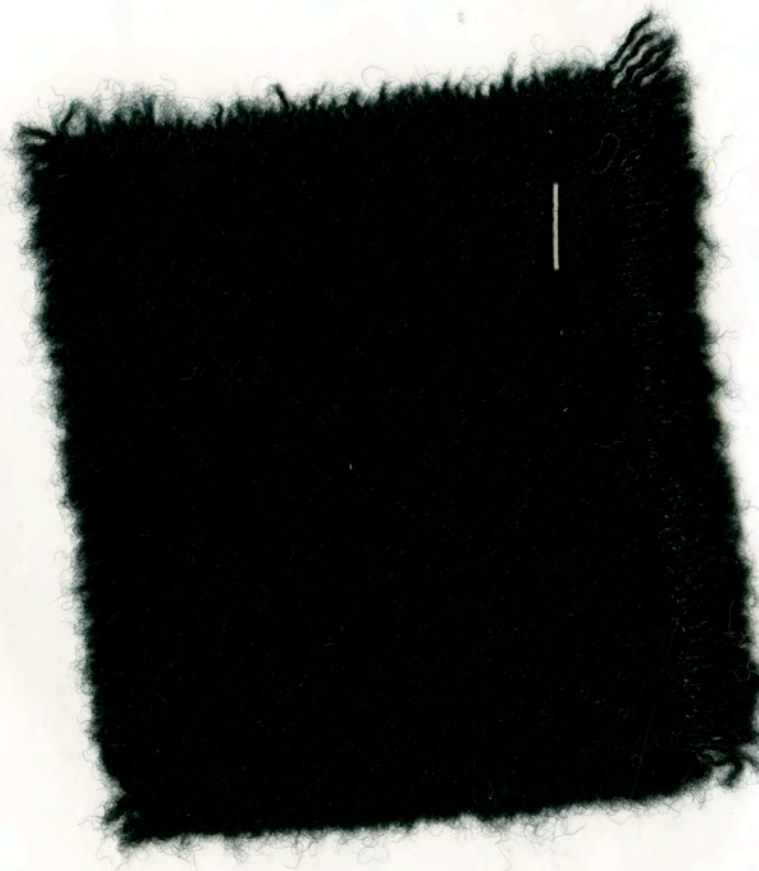
0.8 % GVL 2R 0.32 g.

10 % KLAUSBERG 4 g.

1 % ERALI SEPIA KCM 1002 0.4 ml.

4 % BENIKSYN 1.6 ml. (i 200 g. a 8 ml)

The green used
for one of the
suits in the
exhibition at
ONO Kunstforening



Farger fra Spillingstad prøve # 44
Kombla fargenr. 806

28 APR. 2014

10 % KARBONAT 2 g.

20 g. vann

1 % EGALISERINGSMIDDEL 0,2 ml.

4 % EMULSIFIKANT 0,8 ml.

1,56 % BÅRN 31,2 ml.

1 % MARINE 20 ml.

0,13 % KULZRN 2,6 ml.

Plus sample
from one of
the sample
books at
Spillingstad

Farger prøve # 44
Kombla fargenr. 806.
~~10~~ (10 tråder
per cm)

1,56 % BÅRN

1 % MARINE

0,13 % KULZRN

10 tråder til
fargen

8.

05 AUG. 2013

475 Gula T.

3,9 ml. Gul 22 (0,13%)

2,45 ml. Mörkare (0,081%)

0,85 ml. Grönare (0,028%)

1,5 ml. Röd G. (0,05%)

Sample dyeing
for T.1

Gudbrandsdalen
Uldvarfaktori

Lillehammer

At Museum
2013/14

Mörkare 2.

12 ml. Röd G

5 ml. Gul G

15 ml. Gul 22

475 Grönare 2.

2,3 ml. Turkis Zent

5 ml. Gul 22

1,2 ml. Röd 224

1,7 ml. Grönare Zent

0,8 ml. Röd G

+2 ml. Gul 460

Blomare 1.

30 ml. VIOLETT

15 ml. Gul 22

5 ml. Röd G



+2 ml Gul 460



01 AUG. 2013

7.

LYS Blå 7.

2,1 ml. TURKIS ZENIT

1,75 ml. Blå 224

0,1 ml. ^{Bright} ORANGE ZENIT

+ 1 ml. — 11 —

0,9 ml. Gul 224

Sample dyeing
for T.1
Gudbrandsdalens
Uldvarfaktori
Lillehammer
Art Museum
2013/14



LYS Blå 8.

2 ml. TURKIS ZENIT (0,066%)

1,5 ml. Blå 224 (0,05%)

1 ml. ^{Bright} ORANGE ZENIT } (0,066%)
+ 1 ml. — 11 —

1,5 ml. Gul 224 (0,05%)



Rød 2.

25 ml. Rød K

5 ml. Gul K

10 ml. Gul 22



Gul 1

60 ml. Gul 440

0,8 ml. Rød K

0,4 ml. Gul K



94. The work I have done during the time in the research programme has given me an understanding of the profound motivations and needs I have connected to what I do. It has also made the complexity of the material and the field I am working within visible to me. I am in the centre, and there are several possible directions to follow to explore this material further. These directions are interlinked: they inform each other, and generate energy and the possibility of a varied practice.

95. An important development of the work is to partake in and shape the discussions on the future of the textile industry in Norway. Towards these aspects I have a practical hands on approach. I am a board member of the Norwegian Fashion Institute (NFI), which is a member-based network organization for the fashion industry in Norway. NFI aims to build knowledge, connect people and promote fashion export initiatives, and it works closely with governmental strategies in order to develop the industry nationally and globally. A key activity for NFI is the Fashion Hub project, which has ARENA status from Innovation Norway to develop the Norwegian fashion industry, based on a hub including design companies and manufacturers located in the Oslo area.

96. I am a partner in the Research and Development project *Tvers igjennom norsk* at the Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA). The project is focused on skills and knowledge production within the textile and fashion market in Norway. In collaboration with colleagues at HiOA and staff at the Fashion Hub, I am developing a research project which aims at bringing together the higher level education in this field and the manufacturers operating in Norway on weaving, garment production and knitting. My main responsibility will be the knowledge of woven textile production, and I am developing this part of the project in collaboration with Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill.

97. I am taking part in the initiative on establishing Manufacture Scandinavia, following the model of Manufacture New York, where the idea is to create innovative hubs in the city centres where actual production, technical development and design innovation exist in-house. The concept is built on tradition; one example is how the Fashion District in Manhattan used to function. But the new initiatives are structured to facilitate future needs in a market where tight production lines, short distances and creative environments involving all aspects of production will be in demand. The Scandinavian model will become a network of centres based on the possibilities and specific needs in each country.

98. Another area of my work I want to develop further is the maintenance and representation of the historic aspects of the material. I am in a continuous dialogue with Sjølingstad Woollen Mill, currently focusing on developing a training programme for new staff members in the weaving department. The programme is aiming at bridging the knowledge that already exists at the mill with the experiences I have in activating archive material through remakes of the textiles that used to be in production. This project follows the mill's guidelines as a textile industry museum with a national responsibility of maintaining knowledge, and aims to introduce the general audience to this specific production and its history. In addition to the project at Sjølingstad, I am in dialogue with staff at the

Tingvoll Museum on plans to develop a section at the museum devoted to the strong history of the local textile production. This tradition goes back to the establishing of the Tingvoll Woollen Mill in 1898 and through to Krivi vev, which today is a dynamic and expanding mill, bringing the textile production in the area into the future.

99. In 2016 I will show my work at several venues. A continuation of *Weaving Fabrics for Suits* will be presented at Trønderlag Senter for Samtidskunst in Trondheim. To be able to work on the materials, documents and objects in a very different context architecturally gives me the opportunity to present the material again, building on my experience in discussions I have taken part in since the show at Oslo Kunstforening in 2015.

100. I am developing a new work for the Tendenser biannual at the Gallery F15 in Moss. The work will be an exploration of the colour blue, on intimacy and longing. In the fall of 2016 I have a solo show at FORMAT gallery in Oslo. The focus will be on the design strategies at Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill, branding, new technology and the ethical aspects of being in the market today, both as consumers and manufacturers.

101. The weaving mill at Prinds August Minde, Prindsen, is situated in the centre of Oslo. It is a protected historic site that has not been in regular use since the 1970s. I intend to develop Prindsen into a textile centre for the maintenance of historic aspects of the textile industry in Oslo and as a place for innovation and the development of new textiles for garments and interiors for today's market. Prindsen will become a social arena and a meeting point for students, designers and specialists from the field of mechanical textile industrial production, both nationally and internationally.

102. The design collective HAIK is moving into the Prindsen complex. Being located in the same building will facilitate a continuation of our promising and innovative use of Norwegian textile production. Fifteen years after I first visited the place I am now developing a model for how to generate activity and production at the mill.

HAIKW/
FRANZ
SCHMID
SALE

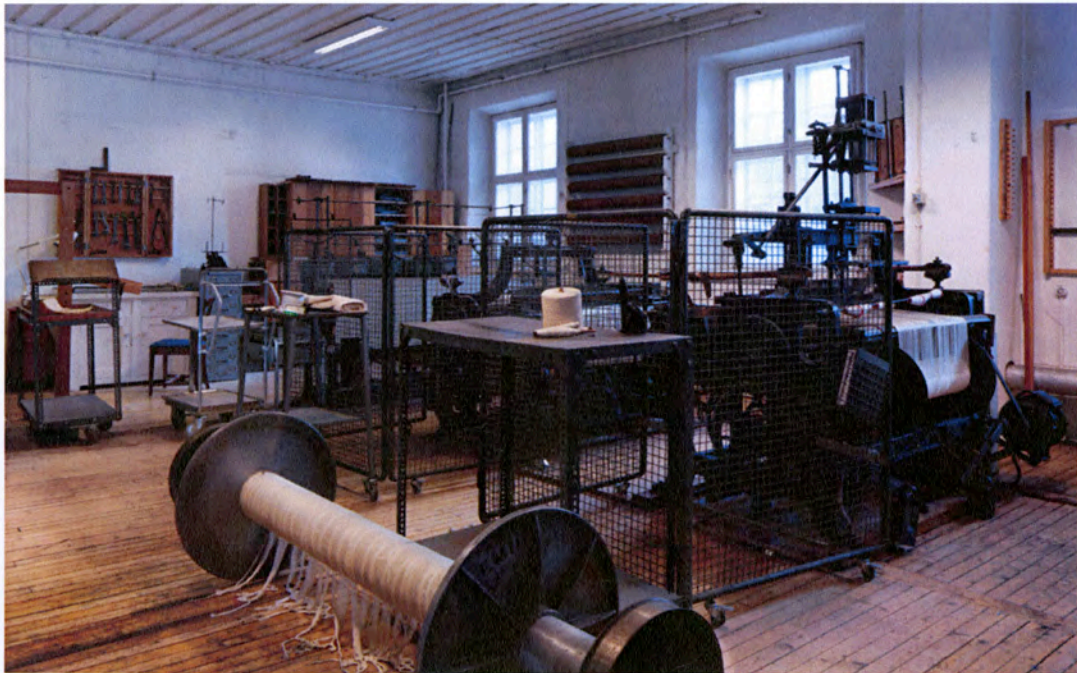
SS15 SPECIAL PRICES
AURLANDSKOEN
VARIOUS SEASONS
SPECIAL EDITIONS
SAMPLES
VAPORWEAR



Time: 13. Juni: 10.00 - 16.00 & 14. Juni: 11.00 - 16.00
Place: Prinds Christian August Minde, Georgata 36

08 JULI 2015

From the
Weaving hall
at Prinds
Augusts Minde
in Oslo



During the years in the programme there have been many contributors that have taken part in the development of my work. First and foremost I would like to thank my supervisors, Gerd Tinglum, Anne Knutsen and Theodor Barth. I am extremely grateful for the thorough and precise response and critique you have given my work and me.

I would like to thank the staff at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts, and in particular Jørn Mortensen - the Dean of the Arts And Crafts department – who has been a great support and a facilitator at the school. I would also like to express my gratitude towards the programme committee accepting my project in the first place, and for facilitating for its development through the years.

One of the most rewarding things being in the research programme has been to be surrounded by other research fellows, experienced and ambitious colleagues with very varied practices. Thank you for great times and great conversations. Thanks also to HAIK for the collaboration, and wonderful times spend working at Sjølingstad and Krivi. I am looking forward to be sharing the Prindsen experience with you.

The interest in, and the response to my work at the weaving mills has been the key to my project. I have learned and experienced so much being at work - sometimes even as a colleague - at Krivi, Gudbrandsdalens and particularly Sjølingstad Woollen Mill. I have spent several months at Sjølingstad during the time in the programme. I have always been met with a positive attitude, and the doors at Disponenten - my second home - has always been open. Thank you so much.

I would like to thank Marianne Hultman at Oslo Kunstforening who opened the gallery for my work. The support, energy and the deep understanding I was met with by Marianne were crucial at the time of structuring the material for exposition at the gallery. Thanks also to Janeke Meyer Utne and Cecilie Skeide at Lillehammer Art Museum, working with you with *Til Gudbrandsdalens Uldvarefabrik* was a rewarding experience.

Without the support and understanding from my partner through most of the time I have been in the programme, Arnfinn Midtbøen, it would not have been possible for me to make this happen. You are an inspiring and thorough person with high standards in everything you do. Sharing my life with you, discussing the development of my work, and the trust I have in you, as reader of the material I have developed has been crucial. Thank you.