

Moving through contrast

Suzanne Jongmans

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A balancing-act

by Anneke van Wolfswinkel

*Living is moving: time is a live creek
bearing changing lights.*

Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*

Within the walls of the studio is an infinite freedom. Here, Suzanne Jongmans surrounds herself with things that catch her eye, discovered at flea markets, in the forest or simply on the street. A pearl necklace, a branch shaped like an antler, an upside-down wine glass with a spherical foot, reed plumes bursting into downy fluff. From the ceiling hang a child's dress, coats and ruffs, silent as dreams, sculpted from transparent sheets of packing foam. Traces left behind by work from the past mingle with objects that might find their way into new images.

The window is thinly coated with white lime to filter incoming daylight, the only source of light she uses when she takes her photographs. Many of the objects she includes in her photographs embody the dual meaning of the word 'light': they weigh next to nothing and are a particular shade of white. Bubble plastic, dandelion puffs, a ruff crafted from polystyrene, the curves of a lemniscate, the petals of a hortensia withered to translucent skeletons.

The two-fold meanings of 'light' each have their own opposite. Clay is both: dark and heavy. In *Lightness of Being* this clay presses on the shoulders of the woman, who is dressed in a white, almost weightless fabric. The downy head of the dandelion in her hand is light and free. It carries the germ of a new beginning.

Space to be free

As a child, Suzanne often retreats into her own world. She plays outside or draws and crafts in her room. She also needs that world

of her own, finding her way in a family of five, with a younger brother who is a constant source of concern because of his autism. Autism also makes contact with her father more difficult, and her parents break up when Suzanne is eight years old. Her mother raises her and her brothers, whilst also holding down a job. As a middle child able to take care of herself, Suzanne picks up on all these tensions without fully understanding what's going on. When she creates something, she feels at ease, she feels free.

Another point of rest during her childhood is the home of her maternal grandparents who live nearby, in the village of Hoeven in Brabant where she grows up. On school days, she walks over to their house for lunch during the break. These people, who have transferred their farm to their son, are so comfortable in each other's company they have little need for words. Her grandmother expresses her love in hugs that are so firm they almost hurt. Everything she touches with her hands becomes colourful and soft: she crochets rugs and coverlets for beds, tables and chairs, makes clothes and curtains. She gives new life to broken clothes pegs, as decorations for a knitting-needle case: from her grandmother Suzanne learns that even the most banal objects have the potential for transformation and beauty.

Later, when she has completed her training as a visual artist, Suzanne sees this unsuspected beauty in packing materials. Styro-foam blocks used to pack a new television in its box become a headdress, the lengths of translucent foam become a millstone collar, trimmed with gold filament. An old black yoga mat becomes armour plating. Rose-hips transform into the beads of a rosary, the ring-pull lid of a tin of tomato purée a precious ring. When Suzanne discovers the artistic potential of packaging materials in 2007, her work gains momentum. Every element that holds meaning for her



cutting loose



gratitude





ATTENZIONE

Per il pericolo di soffocazione, tenere lontano da neonati. Non usare in culla e box. Questa non è un giocattolo.

WARNING of suffocation
away from babies and children
old from cribs, beds, carriages
This bag is not a toy.

WARNUNG
Um Erstickungsgefahr zu vermeiden, von Säuglingen fernhalten. Nicht in Kinderwagen und Kinderbetten verwenden. Dies ist kein Spielzeug.



FD-BE



WARNUNG
Um jegliche Gefahren oder Schäden
zu vermeiden, mahnen Sie diese
Kneten von Kindern fern. Verwenden
Sie ihn nicht in Kinderbetten
Kneten wagen etc.
Dieser Beutel ist kein Spielzeug

ATTENTION
Pour éviter
tous dommages
ce sac est
à utiliser
loin des lits
de bébé
et des jouets

Questa busta non è un giocattolo.
Non usare
culle, culla,
Non usare
Non usare
Non usare

WARNUNG Gebrauchen Sie
Um jedwede Gefahr
zu vermeiden, ist
zu vermeiden, ist
zu vermeiden, ist
zu vermeiden, ist
zu vermeiden, ist
zu vermeiden, ist

WARNING
To avoid any
keep away from
do not breathe
or play near
this



Eviter tout risque
nouffement, tenir
hors de portée
des enfants.
Ce sac n'est pas un jouet.











Patience
60 × 75 cm, 2013
p.49



Voltar
60 × 75 cm, 2013
p.52



Julie, Portrait of a Lady
60 × 75 cm, 2012
p.55



Room for Change
75 × 95 cm, 2013
p.61



Origin
60 × 75 cm, 2014
p.63



Solitude
75 × 95 cm, 2014
p.66



Closure
60 × 75 cm, 2014
p.67



Familiar Patterns II
60 × 50 cm, 2017
pp.130–131



De Belofte (The Promise)
40 × 40 cm, 2011
pp.132–133



De Berg (The Pile)
75 × 95 cm, 2009
p.135

Kindred Spirits



Present
75 × 95 cm, 2015
p.71



Home
90 × 112 cm, 2015
p.73



Sensibility
60 × 75 cm, 2015
p.77



Understanding
90 × 112 cm, 2015
pp.78–79



Childhood
60 × 75 cm, 2015
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You are here
75 × 95 cm, 2016
p.85



Intuition
75 × 95 cm, 2016
p.89



Kind Words
75 × 95 cm, 2016
p.91



Lightness of Being
60 × 77 cm, 2017
p.115



Trancendence
150 × 45 cm, 2017
pp.118–121



Where the Wild Roses Grow
45 × 64 cm, 2017
p.125



Our Kingdom
40 × 50 cm, 2017
p.129



Confronting Love
150 × 200 cm, 2018
p.139



Holding Space
88.5 × 111 cm, 2018
p.147



Between Reality and Dreams
75 × 95 cm, 2018
p.151



Undivided Attention
150 × 180 cm, 2019
p.155



The Receptive Mode
65 × 85 cm, 2019
p.159



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