

"I say, beware of all enterprises that require new clothes, and not rather a new wearer of clothes. If there is not a new man, how can the new clothes be made to fit? If you have any enterprise before you, try it in your old clothes. All men want, not something to do with, but something to do, or rather something to be. Perhaps we should never procure a new suit, however ragged or dirty the old, until we have so conducted, so enterprised or sailed in some way, that we feel like new men in the old, and that to retain it would be like keeping new wine in old bottles."

Henry David Thoreau, Walden

"Dass ein Kleidungsstück ein Zeichen ist, das viele Dinge ausdrückt, die unsichtbar sind."

Lutz Huelle (Designer)

"The artist has to be a warrior ... to conquer not just new territory but himself and his weaknesses"

Marina Abramovic

A soft armour

Monique Besten

One of the first days I wore my three piece suit, I saw a flash of blue. I caught it on the inside of my suit. In white thread. I never saw a kingfisher before.

There is an oil stain on my right sleeve. A late dinner with friends. It has been there for 83 days now.

A woman laughed when she scanned the QR code on my back and saw the drawing of the beheaded man. I don't know why she laughed. He's always bothering me, scratching my leg.

Something Thoreau said about suits. "*beware of all enterprises that require new clothes, and not rather a new wearer of clothes*".

Inside out of sight. Outside insight.

An old man I met on the street told me how they all stored their best suit in the bomb shelter.

Wa(n)(i)ting to uncount days.

Is a landscape a collection of threads? Is a suit a field you can walk through?

I'll only fight windmills when they spoil the view.

(I've been wearing a three piece walking suit since december 15, 2012. Every day I embroider a drawing or text on the inside of my suit. Slowly the outer world is creeping inside while the inside world moves outside. A mindmap of what happens when you walk the inbetween.)

documentation: www.moniqueinasuit.blogspot.com

(every day a photo of 1 new drawing & 1 photo of me in the suit on that day)

(day 7)

suit thoughts

since last week I'm wearing a suit

i wore it on the train, in the optical museum in Jena, in a mild snowstorm, in a cafe, in another cafe (where I spilled coffee over it), eating diner at a friends' place, holding a ladder while two people were painting a wall, at a concert, in my own house, in the supermarket and everywhere inbetween

i will wear it the coming weeks, months, while sewing my thoughts on the inside and wondering what this is all about

is it a diary? a mindmap? a performance? an egocentric ego-document or can it communicate something more than what is on my mind?

what is the role of inside and outside? how can I use the voyeuristic element?

is the value in my perseverance to wear it?

does the content matter or does it only matter there is content, any content?

should i go on a trip again and wear it while walking?

it makes me more attentive to the world but does it makes others more attentive?

while sewing in the train to jena I sat next to a woman who was shouting the private details of her life in her phone so we could all hear it but nobody took notice of it. do you have to be secretive to make people interested these days? silent? on the inside?

i had some nice conversations during the process. and saw a kingfisher in the snow. only because I am wearing a suit. i'm sure.

(day 47)

suit thoughts

suit: a group of things used together

suit: courtship, the act or an instance of courting a woman

suit: a set of matching outer garments, especially one consisting of a coat with trousers

to suit: to fit

to suit: to adapt

to suit: to please

suit the action to the word, the words to the action (Hamlet, Shakespeare)

(day 78)

suit thoughts

last weekend i met a man in a three piece suit
his wife had sewn it for him
out of the old curtains from the house they lived in when their son died
he was telling stories in his suit
his consolation suit
stories to his son to keep him awake, alive
it was only a story
and while telling it he took it off
the suit, or maybe the story

(day 98)

suit thoughts

a new old friend wrote a few lines to me
after I had flooded him with words and suggestions
telling me he didn't have as many worlds as I have

I was puzzled
did he mean words or worlds
or is it the same thing?

when I don't know what I'm thinking I'm writing
words make things clear to me
and I do move in different worlds to gather food for thought
to feed my words

but what for?

I could stay in this one and be silent
if I don't need the words I don't need the worlds

there's one dilemma though
should I send these words to my friend?
to tell him he made me think?
are they for him or are they for me?

he doesn't need these words
and I don't need them either
but I've got a suit I can sew them in
nobody will see them there

(day 104)

suit thoughts

it is getting busy inside
the former pope still hangs upside down
next to Berlusconi
the hour we skipped to make it feel like summer is remembered
two deer fight, their horns entangled
a chimney, three days without smoke
white clouds eventually
men and women walking, singing, laughing
hitting, killing, thinking,
the deer i ate and the bird i found
wanting turned into waiting turned into wafting
seeds grew into flowers from the folds of my trousers
a mountain range in my left sleeve
a house filled with trees in my right
chavez
and another man who died
friends
strangers
decisions
yes and no and maybe's
heartaches and earthquakes
politics, a nuclear explosion
sewing buttons like wittgenstein
getting crazy
hurricanes and showers
grinding lenses like spinoza
eyes everywhere
environmental issues
next to cups of coffee
(which can also be environmental issues
or just something to start the day with)
happiness with a single p
a(r)mour
a harness of love
i walked through the city with an ocean in my sleeve
flew, floated
fell, failed
forgot
the nonsense, blödsinn
I forced spring into a pocket
counted days in a colar
more
or less

(the first day)

suit thoughts

Thoreau and Abramovic say the same thing
we conquer the world by conquering ourselves

I decided as an artist, or as a human being, I needed an armour
a soft one
one to gather stories in and share them with the outside world

a clumsy harness like Don Quixote's
a ragged and torn one, like Thoreau's
an anonymous one, like the hackers' headless suit
a symbolic one, like Beuys'
a suit like in the old days, for everyday use
a suit like businessmen wear, to impress
a suit to be similar, a suit to be different
all in one
a soft armour

i wore it 108 days
before i realised I had forgotten I already had one
a soft armour

i tried it on today
it fitted well