



The spatial installation “*Elastic Kin*” shows a group of textile objects – *Gefüge*<sup>1</sup> – that were assembled from discarded and abandoned garments. They exist as individuals as well as a kin. Assembled from used garments, found in the streets of K., produced by others in other contexts, they invert their original purpose by becoming bodies of their own, no longer dependent on being activated by a human body. The surface of every *Gefüge* is like a secret map, containing traces of anonymous hands working on them. The sound in the installation is an echo of almost vanished collective memories of past moments and places. “*Elastic Kin*” attempts to depict a widespread kinship, that is imagined through invisible, loose and elastic threads mapping an international system of supply chains, workers and consumers, trend forecast and unpredictable zeitgeist, mass production and meditative handcraft. Which traces of these contexts do the garments contain?

The video shows a performative intervention in public space. It shows the *Gefüge* leading a new existence outside their production and marketing contexts: They return to the shopping mall, animated by the people, they once used to dress.

<sup>1</sup> Bennet, Jane: *Vibrant Matter. A Political Ecology of Things*, 2010, p. 24/35 “Assemblages are ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts. Assemblages are living, throbbing confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within. They have uneven topographies, because some of the points at which the various affects and bodies cross paths are more heavily trafficked than others, and so power is not distributed equally across its surface. Assemblages are not governed by any central head: no one materiality or type of material has sufficient competence to determine consistently the trajectory or impact of the group. The effects generated by an assemblage are, rather, emergent properties, emergent in that their ability to make something happen (a newly inflected materialism, a blackout, a hurricane, a war on terror) is distinct from the sum of the vital force of each materiality considered alone. Each member and proto-member of the assemblage has a certain vital force, but there is also an effectivity proper to the grouping as such: an agency of the assemblage. And precisely because each member-actant maintains an energetic pulse slightly “off” from that of the assem-

ELASTIC KIN NOTES

SOMETHING  
THAT ABSORBS  
NOT JUST LIGHT OR NOISE  
BUT HIDES AND PLAYS  
AND STORES:  
VIBRATIONS  
SMELLS  
MOVEMENT  
BLOOD  
SWEAT  
COLOR  
MEMORIES  
PAINT  
AIR  
ENERGY

THE SMELL OF FABRIC SOFTENER STAYED  
IN THE FLAT FOR DAYS.

ANGELA: (...) I swear the thing has an aura.  
(...)

ANGELA: I can't look at an object too much or it sets me on fire. More mysterious than the soul is matter. More enigmatic than the thought, is the "thing". The thing is miraculously concrete in your hands. Furthermore, the thing is great proof of the spirit. A word is also a thing – a winged thing that I pluck from the air with my mouth when I speak. I make it concrete. The thing is the materialization of aerial energy. I am an object that time and energy gathered in space. The laws of physics govern my spirit in a visible block of my body of flesh.<sup>2</sup>

I SEE YOU / SEE YOU LYING THERE – ON  
THE FLOOR / SPILLING OUT OF TORN GAR-  
BAGE BAGS OR CARDBOARD BOXES / YOU  
ARE KNOTTED TOGETHER / YOUR SLEEVES  
TANGLED IN YOUR LEGS / YOU'RE LYING  
THERE / YOU'RE GETTING WET AND THE  
SUN IS BLEACHING / YOU OUT AND THE  
WIND IS BLOWING DIRT ON / YOU

EVERY LINE / OR CLEAR SHAPE / OR BODY  
IS TURNING / INTO SOMETHING SOFT /  
AND MORE DIFFUSE / THE MORE SURFACE/  
THE BETTER DIFFUSION

FABRIC IS SO *DURCHLÄSSIG* BECAUSE OF  
THE STRUCTURE AND IT IS VERY MOVE-  
ABLE. EVERY TEXTILE SURFACE CONSISTS  
OF FIBERS AND EVERY FIBER CONSISTS OF  
FILAMENTS.

Sometimes, she'd get overwhelmed: There was too  
much fabric, it was like the ocean, waves of cloth  
coming in and threatening to drown her.<sup>3</sup>

SOMEONE MUST HAVE THROWN THEM  
JUST RIGHT ON THE PAVEMENT.

WETHER YOU FIND RAGS OR TREASURES  
IS A KIND OF GAMBLING.

THE GOOD ONES IN THE POTTY, THE BAD  
ONES IN THE LITTLE BOWL. BUT MOST OF  
YOU ARE BAD. SO YOU ARE PRESSED, BUN-  
DLED, SHIPPED – AND WHO KNOWS, YOU  
MIGHT BE SHREDDED. POSSIBLY YOU END  
UP BURNING, BY ACCIDENT OR PURPOSE.  
WHAT REMAINS IS A PILE OF SHRUNKEN  
PLASTIC FIBERS AND TOXIC FUMES.

FINGERTIPS GET CAUGHT ON YOUR  
ROUGH POLYESTER SURFACES.

I FOUND A PAIR OF TURQUOISE FLIP-FLOPS  
WITH A PLASTIC FLOWER RIGHT IN THE MID-  
DLE AND I REMEMBER FEELING GUILTY FOR  
THAT. MY FRIEND E. ALSO BOUGHT A PAIR  
OF SHOES – CANVAS SNEAKERS. AND AS  
WE WERE AT HOME, LOOKING AT THE NEW  
BARGAINS, SHE FOUND A HUGE, 12 CM LONG  
DEAD GRASSHOPPER INSIDE THE LEFT SHOE.  
ITS DEAD BODY WAS EVIDENCE THAT SHOES  
HAD BEEN SOMEWHERE ELSE.

THINGS PERSIST. MAYBE THEY BURN  
OR STAY IN THE SOIL FOREVER.

IF THEY HAD BEEN PART OF VERY UNIQUE AND SPECIAL MOMENTS THEN THEY WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN DISCARDED FROM THEIR WARDROBES, EVEN IF NOBODY WAS WEARING THEM ANY MORE. THEY WOULD STILL BE TOUCHED ONCE IN A WHILE BY A HUMAN HAND, RECALLING A SHARED MEMORY.

Zeichen von Vergänglichkeit, Index verflossener Zeit. (...) zeigt eine unbekannte Erinnerungspur, in die Dauer diskontinuierlich eingeschrieben ist.<sup>4</sup>

A LANDSCAPE OF FAMILIAR SEAMS AND UNKNOWN ANONYMOUS ONES. IT WAS NOT ME ALONE, SEWING. IT WAS US.

THEY WERE  
MADE IN MYANMAR  
MADE IN VIETNAM  
MADE IN BANGLADESH  
MADE IN P.R.C.  
MADE IN TURKEY  
MADE IN GUATEMALA

Handarbeit.

Die Zeit, die in den Körper eindringt.<sup>5</sup>

KNITTED TEXTILES UNLIKE WOVEN ONES ARE ALWAYS ELASTIC. ONLY ONE YARN IS HOOKED MORE OR LESS LOOSELY THROUGH THE LOOP OF THE ONES ON THE PREVIOUS ROW. THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF LOOPS: LEFT ONES AND RIGHT ONES, BUT A RIGHT LOOP IS ALWAYS A LEFT ONE IF YOU TURN THE PIECE OVER, AND THE OTHER WAY ROUND (TO PURL AND TO KNIT). EVEN IF THE KNITWEAR IS SUPER THIN AND NEAT, IT IS ALWAYS ELASTIC. KNITWEAR IS A LITTLE BIT MORE FRAGILE – BECAUSE IF THE YARN IS CUT ONCE, THE WHOLE PIECE STARTS TO UNRAVEL. OF COURSE, JUST UNTIL THE NEXT SEAM.

IMAGINE ALL GARMENTS BEING SOMEHOW CONNECTED WITH EACH OTHER. TIED TO EACH OTHER THROUGH ELASTIC THREADS. COMMUNICATING IN THEIR OWN WAY – A HUGE COLLECTIVE ARCHIVE OF FORGOTTEN MOMENTS. ENDING UP AS DUST SPREAD ALL OVER OUR PLANET.

THEY DONT HAVE CRAZY STAINS OR  
HOLES OR ARE VISIBLY BAD. THEY JUST  
GAVE SOMEBODY A BAD FEELING, A FEEL-  
ING OF TORTURE. EVEN IF THEY TRIED  
NOT TO. BECAUSE THEY ARE ELASTIC.  
AND THE GARMENTS THEN TURN FROM  
MEAN INTO SAD, AND THAN THEY JUST  
TANGLED AND KNOTTED THEMSELVES  
WITH EACH OTHER.

THEY ARE JUST GARMENTS, CUT IN PIECES.  
SEWN TOGETHER AND STUFFED. OBJECTS?  
BODIES? BUNDLES? SCULPTURES?  
COULD SOMEONE PLEASE CARRY THEM?  
BECAUSE THEY WONT WALK BY THEMSELVES.

<sup>2</sup> Lispector, Clarice: *A Breath of Life*, 1970, p. 100/101

<sup>3</sup> Atwood, Margaret: *The Testaments*, 2019, p. 40

<sup>4</sup> Vinken, Barbara: *Mode nach der Mode. Kleid und Geist am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts*, 1993, p. 66

<sup>5</sup> Weil, Simone: *Schwerkraft und Gnade*, 1947, p. 195

GEFÜGE: BLACK (THE VERY FIRST ONE) /  
SCHWARZ (DAS ALLERERSTE) /  
RED (THE ONE WITH A LONG  
HANDLE) / ROT (DAS MIT DEM  
LANGEN HENKEL) /  
LIGHT BLUE (THE ONE THAT'S  
CHEATING) / HELLBLAU (DAS, DAS  
SCHUMMELT) /  
LIGHT GREY (THE ONE THAT HAS  
A HOLE FOR A HEAD) /  
HELLGRAU (DAS, DAS EIN LOCH  
FÜR EINEN KOPF HAT) /  
GREEN (THE COSMIC ONE) /  
GRÜN (DAS KOSMISCHE) /  
YELLOW GREEN (THE  
PHLEGMATIC ONE) / GELBGRÜN  
(DAS PHLEGMATISCHE) /  
ROSE (THE CANDY ONE, SOFT  
BUT STICKY) / ROSA (DAS WEICHE  
UND DOCH KLEBRIGE) /  
WHITE (THE ONE THAT'S  
STRUCTURED) / WEISS (DAS  
STRUKTURIERTE) /  
DARK BLUE (THE ONE THAT  
SMELLS LIKE WORK) /  
DUNKELBLAU (DAS, DAS NACH  
ARBEIT RIECHT) /  
PURPLE (THE YOUNG ONE) / LILA  
(DAS JUGENDLICHE) /  
BREIGE (THE OLD ONE) / BREIGE  
(DAS ALTE)



ELASTIC KIN

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