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. Styrofoam 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



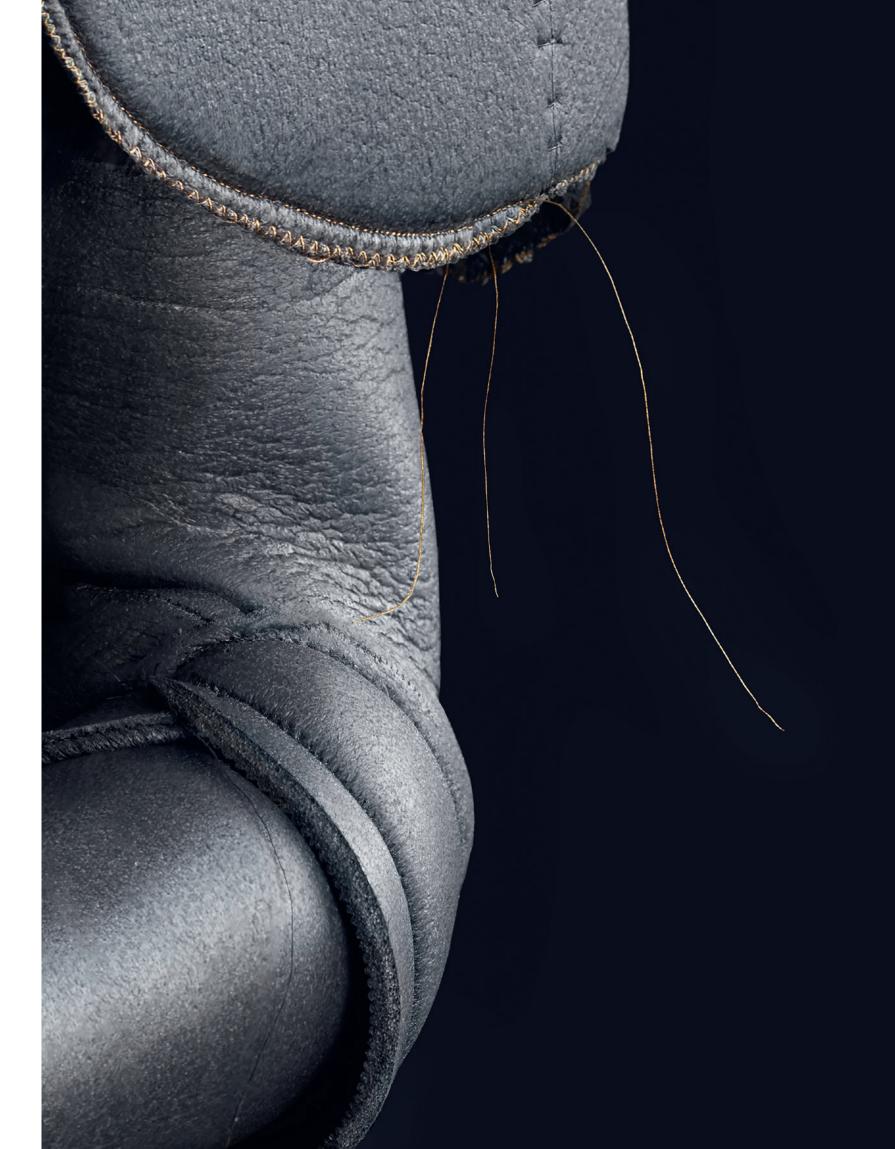
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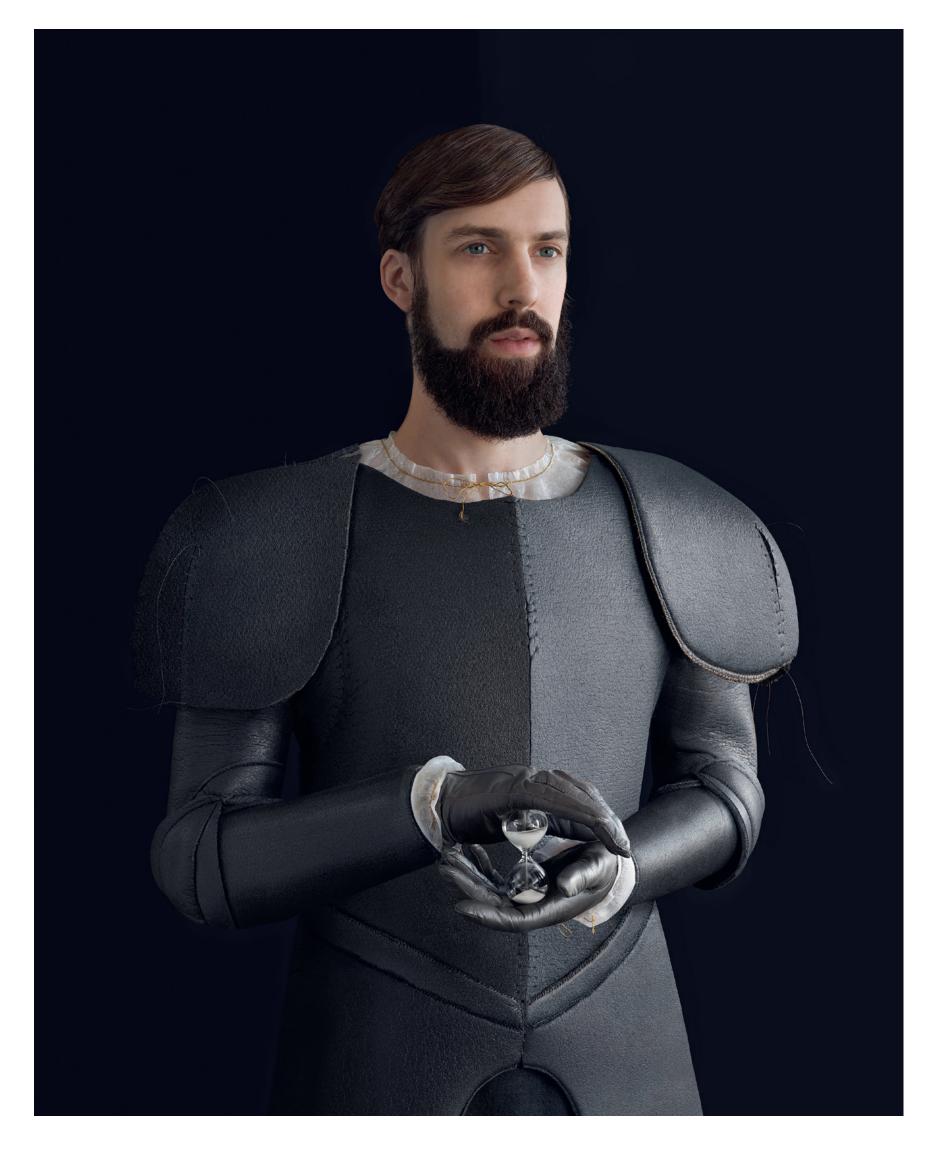




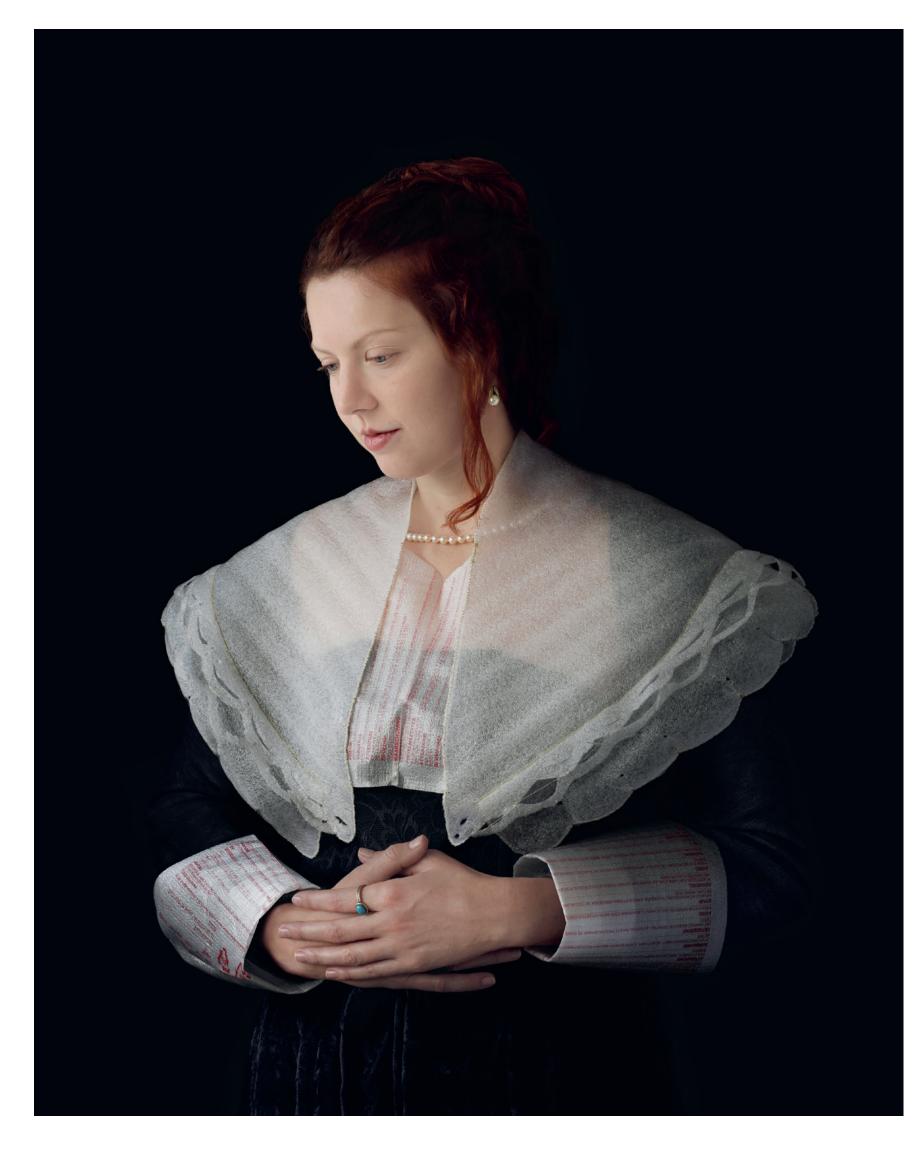














Patience 60 × 75 cm, 2013 p.49



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

Kindred Spirits



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



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 p.81



You are here 75 × 95 cm, 2016 p.85



Intuition 75 × 95 cm, 2016 p.89



Kind Words 75 × 95 cm, 2016 p.91



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



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



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



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



Our Kingdom 40 × 50 cm, 2017 p.129



Undevided Attention 150 × 180 cm, 2019 p.155



Confronting Love 150 × 200 cm, 2018 p.139



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



Holding Space 88.5 × 111 cm, 2018 p.147



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