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Did you have to wear a school uniform during your school time?
Yes, when I went to my secondary school.
I went there when I was nine. It was a private school and there was a very, very strict uniform.

You had to wear it? Oh, absolutely, you had to wear it.

And can you remember how it looked like? Like a detailed description?

It was a grey sort of gabardine wool dress, a white shirt and a tie, red, black stripy tie. A red cardigan and a blazer, with a batch. It was a kind of very odd looking hat, a red corduroy, with a batch on the front and a peak.

This was very different from many of the hats that other schools were wearing at this time.

And probably when I first had that hat I quite liked it, but then it became just a terrible thing I had to wear. A most embarrassing thing to wear, yeah, it was terrible.

And there was also a belt, one of those money belts. A wide, red belt, with a metal sort of clip with a zip, where you could put money in. That was quite an important part of it.

And did you liked your uniform, did you enjoyed to wear it?

No, I hated it.

I liked it, when I was younger, but then I grew to hate it. So you should do everything you could, not to wear it probably, you know. Roll your sleeves up or to have a skirt, that was to short... all that kind of things.

Yeah, and especially the hat, because you had to wear it. They told you, you had to wear the hat on the way to school and on your way back.

So I used to come to school on the bus, on the public bus and we used to get teased by the other school children because of the hat we wore. Yeah, so I would take it off.

And at the last day of school I threw it into the river.



Prozesse der UniFORMierung

Da hängen sie auf der Stange, Schuluniformen. Sie wirken authentisch, lassen das Flair britischer „elite“- und „working-class“-Schulen gleichermaßen aufleben. Und doch stimmt hier etwas nicht. Warum erscheinen die Schuluniformen auf der anderen Wandseite zurückgenommen, noch im Stadium des Entwurfs mit hängenden Fäden und fehlendem Volumen oder sind sie schon im Stadium des Zerfalls angelangt? Was verbirgt sich hinter den stofflichen Trennwänden oder sind diese selbst bereits Objekte?

Eine erste Annäherung bietet das Stoffliche selbst. Die unterschiedliche Beschaffenheit und Farbe der gewählten Stoffe beschwören Erlebniswelten vergangener Tage. Marineblauer Wollstoff erweist sich als das universell Verwendbare und klassisch Traditionelle; das marone Wollene gerät einen Tick ins Extravagant-Elitäre und schließlich entführt der rosa Satin in die Träume junger Mädchen.

Kathrin Rabenort beschäftigte sich seit mehreren Jahren mit dem Thema Schuluniformen. Sie studierte ein Jahr in London am Goldsmith College. Kinder in Schuluniformen fielen ihr dabei im alltäglichen Straßenbild Londons sofort auf. Sie befragte in England aufgewachsene Kollegen nach ihren Erfahrungen mit der getragenen Schuluniform. Oft sprachen die Interviewten erstmals Stunden über das ihnen Selbstverständliche.

Ausgangspunkt ihrer Arbeit ist das Sichtbare, hier das visuell Ungewohnte der Schuluniformen im Straßenbild. Sie begann in einem ihr nahen Medium die Schuluniformen nachzunähen, und zwar genau so, wie sie von den Interviewten beschrieben wurden. Dabei lag das Hauptaugenmerk nicht darauf, im Sinne einer historischen Rekonstruktion, der tatsächlichen Uniform nahe zu kommen, sondern für die Erinnerungsprozesse eine materielle und räumliche Form zu finden.

Das Fragmentarische der Erinnerung ist visuell umgesetzt in den Kleidungsstücken mit den herunterhängenden Fäden, den abstehenden Naht- und Saumgrate, dem Ausgefranst, das noch auf seine Vollendung wartet oder gerade auseinander fällt, zerrissene Fetzen einer immer unvollständigen Erinnerung, skizzenhaft festgehalten.

Diese Kleidungsskizzen sind den ebenfalls nach der Erinnerung ausgefertigten Uniformen gegenübergestellt. Auf eine Überprüfung des Wahrheitsgehaltes dieser Erinnerung wurde bewusst verzichtet. So ist es nicht entscheidend, ob die Schuluniformen tatsächlich so oder anders aussahen. Sie stehen beispielhaft für die Schuluniform, so wie die Erzählungen der Befragten beispielhaft für die Erfahrungen mit dieser verordneten Schulkleidung stehen.

Der graue Hintergrund vereinheitlicht zum einen die ausgeführten und entwurfsbehaltenen Uniformen. Das Grau deutet zum anderen auf die Unschärfe der Erinnerung, aus der diese Stücke geboren sind.

Im hinteren Bereich der Ausstellung ist ein schmaler Korridor aus Stoff gestaltet, rosaseiden ummantelt, der diese idolschwangeren Mädchenträume in der körperlichen Nähe zum Satin nachempfinden lässt. In der Flucht befindet sich eine Fotografie, die das Madonna-Album „True Blue“ von 1986 zeigt, wiederum das Erinnerungsfragment einer Interviewten.

Das sehnsüchtige Hineindenken in andere idealisierte Frauenkörper - Madonna fungiert hier als Paradebeispiel - klingt schon zu Beginn der Seidenpassage mit der Zeichnung einer Corsage an, die für Madonna gefertigt wurde. Prozesse des Erwachsenwerdens, das Ausloten der eigenen Persönlichkeit durch Kleidung, gar die Formung der eigenen Körperlichkeit, finden hier ein deutliches Bild.

Dem seidenen luftigen Wunschtraum steht die Erinnerung an die Schulkleidung aus grünem schwerem Wollstoff gegenüber. Der kleine Schulschreibtisch lässt die ganze Dimension von Erziehung und Bildung aufkeimen, während Passagen der Interviews über Kopfhörer das Atmosphärische dieser Schulzeit sowie das konkrete Gefühl und Erleben im Tragen dieser Kleidung aufleben lassen. Was schwer in Worte zu fassen ist, findet in Materialqualitäten einen entsprechenden Ausdruck. Die Schwere des grünen Wollstoffes ist fühlbar. Dieser Eindruck wird um ein Sichtbares verstärkt, in dem durch die Schwerkraft gelängten Mantelobjekt, Beton lastet im Inneren. Nachvollziehbar wird das Körpergefühl, eine solch dunkel lastende Schulkleidung tragen zu müssen.

Es ist kein Zufall, dass die Künstlerin hier nicht einfach einen Mantel nähte, sondern der Mantel lediglich die Passform für ein Objekt abgab, dass durch sein Volumen und die Abgeschlossenheit seiner Form körperhaft wirkt. Es macht einen großen Unterschied in der Wirkung und Ausdeutung dieses Objekts, dass die Ärmel zusammengenäht sind. Sie sind ihrer Funktion enthoben und schließen den Mantel zu einer eigenständigen Skulptur ab.

Das Medium Kleidung scheint soziologische Themen qua ihrer Natur in sich zu tragen. Vielleicht ist es aber auch die sensible Hängung, dass unser ganzes Erfahrungsspektrum vom Tragen und Bewegen in gesellschaftlichen Räumen, dem Wohlfüh-

len und Unwohlfühlen in seiner zweiten Haut, Momente voll Peinlichkeit und Stolz aufbegehren lässt. Dennoch ist diese Kunst keine soziologische Untersuchung, sondern birgt die Umkehrung einer soziologischen Betrachtungsweise, wie sie Georg Simmel¹ mit seinen Untersuchungen der Formen der Vergesellschaftung begründete. Es geht gerade nicht um die Funktion dieser Formen für die Gesellschaftsbildung.

Die Rekonstruktion der Normierungsabläufe im Inneren eines Menschen steht im Zentrum ihres Forschens. Kathrin Rabenort versucht in den Interviews herauszufinden, wie es sich anfühlte, die verordnete Schulkleidung zu tragen, welche Auswirkung diese Kleidung so nah am eigenen Körper auf das Körpergefühl hatte, wie sie Körper- und Selbstgefühl veränderte, darauf einwirkte und es schließlich bildete. So ist zum Auftakt Bild geworden, was eine Interviewteilnehmerin über den sich jahrelang anpassenden immer gleichen Schulrock sagte: das Hineinwachsen.

Der Uniformrock hängt vor der Wand, auf der schemenhaft das immer größer werdende Mädchen gezeichnet ist. Ob damit auch ein Hineinwachsen in eine gesellschaftliche Rolle gemeint ist, bleibt in der Schwebe. Doch ist die künstlerische Umsetzung vom Hineinwachsen konkreter als alles Gesagte, als jegliche Erinnerung. Der blaue Rock der Erinnerung hat eine konkrete Form und Farbe gefunden. Der haptische Reiz des Wollstoffes verstärkt die plastische, bzw. körperliche Wirkung des genähten Objekts. Darin wird die Abwesenheit des Körpers umso bewusster, die durch eine in den Raum hineinragende Präsentation noch um ein weiteres betont wird.

Die tatsächliche Umsetzung dieser Aufforderung einer begehbaren Installation, in der wir als Betrachtende gleichzeitig ein Teil des Werks sind, macht die reflexive Spannweite im Schaffen der Künstlerin deutlich. Was an analytischer Zerlegung des

Tatbestandes „Normierung durch Kleidung“ vorgeführt wurde, wird auf uns selbst als Menschen in Kleidung zurückgeworfen. Es ist nicht möglich, eine analytische Distanz zu diesem Thema einzunehmen.

Die Kleidung ist das nächste Ausdrucksmittel, zu zeigen, wer ich bin. Kleidung ist ein identitätsbildender Faktor in unserem Leben. Sie kann kreativ und mit aller Freiheit genutzt werden, doch gleichzeitig gibt es immer den Blick von außen, der prüft, einordnet, anhand der Kleidung Gruppen zuordnet. Es ist nicht möglich, diesem Zirkel der Normierung und Konditionierung durch Kleidung zu entgehen. Wenn in der Pop Art mit den Verfahren des Seriellen und der Verfremdung die Konditionierung durch die Konsumbilderwelt vorgeführt wird, so bezieht sich Rabenort auf die Konditionierung durch Kleidung.

Der Titel der Ausstellung „... sed vitae discimus“ (...sondern für das Leben lernen wir) hat Aufforderungscharakter und ist einer von Seneca² abgeleiteten Formulierung entnommen, die wohl eher heutigen Pädagogikvorstellungen entspricht. Das prägende Erziehungsmotto vergangener Tage wird an dem Schulabzeichen sichtbar, das ins überdimensionierte vergrößert, mehr Raum und damit mehr Realität annimmt, als das tatsächlich kleine Emblem auf dem Blazer. Vor einem stilisierten Wikingerschiff mit geblähtem Segel prangt der Schriftzug „in adventure we die“ auf einem Schwert und glorifiziert die Schule zur Heldenschmiede. Ob das Motto tatsächlich so lautete oder die Erinnerung dem Interviewten ein Schnippchen schlug, bleibt offen. Untrügerisch wird das Prägende dieses Mottos in der Übertreibung, der extremen Vergrößerung und schwertartigen Hängung vermittelt. Wie ein zweischneidiges Schwert prangt der Stoff, lastet und legt zu beiden Seiten offen: eine glorifizierende und eine ausgefranste, zerfasernde Seite.

Solche Abzeichen sind in ihrer Emblematisierung prädestiniert für die Identifizierung und Konditionierung. Die Erinnerung in solcher

Monstrosität umzusetzen, macht einmal deutlich, dass es kein Entrinnen gibt.

Den sichtbar gemachten gesellschaftlichen Prozessen, der Normierung und Formierung folgen wir auf der Spur dieser künstlerischen Recherche, die ohne Lösung, moralische oder pädagogische Ratschläge, aber nicht ohne ein Quäntchen Humor auskommt. So lässt die Künstlerin den roten Bommel vom Kopf bis zum Hintern herab, wie einen fallen gelassenen alten Zopf, und dennoch ist und bleibt es ein Hut. Oder etwa nicht?

Dr. Viola Michely

¹ Georg Simmel, „Soziologie. Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung“ (1908), Frankfurt am Main 1999. Darin bespricht Simmel den Schmuck mit folgenden Worten: „Jedes Eigentum ist Ausdehnung der Persönlichkeit, ... am ehesten und vollständigsten geschieht dies an unserem Körper.“ (Zitat S. 420f.) Eine Aussage, die m. E. auch auf die Kleidung zuträfe. Doch Simmel sieht die Kleidung im Gegensatz zum Schmuck eben nicht als Eigentum. Dafür macht er vor allem die sichtbaren Spuren des Tragens verantwortlich.

² Seneca wendete sich mit den Worten „Non vitae, sed scholae discimus“ (nicht für das Leben, sondern für die Schule lernen, Sen. Ep. ad Luc. 106,12) gegen die römischen Philosophenschulen seiner Zeit. Es handelt sich hier um die verkürzte Umkehrung in „Non scholae, sed vitae discimus“ (nicht für die Schule, sondern für das Leben lernen wir).





I was in a strange school, that was kind of run by very traditional English teachers.

One of whom being a fighter pilot in the Second World War and he had some really strange views from how children should behave. Most of the teachers were certainly for my generation, very strict and traditional. So we had to wear this uniform, that mirrored that kind of discipline. I was in school at a time that the teacher would still dispense corporal punishment.

Everything fitted into this really strange kind of public school experience, but it wasn't. It was just a normal state school, but it had this kind of feel of being a public school. There were prefects, top boys and top girls and it was run by fascists basically.

What kind of uniform did you have to wear?

From eleven to sixteen I wore a beautiful maroon uniform, black trousers, black shoes, grey or white shirts, a tie and you could wear a blazer. The blazer had the badge and the motto on, which was very disturbing.

There was a kind of a shield and on that shield was a long boat, seen from the side, like a Viking long boat with shields across it. Instead of a mast, there was a sword all the way through it and the motto was something like: death and adventure.

I think it was meant to be pushing the idea of self-sacrifice. It was all over the place because it was quite an old school and it had big kind of wooden panels on the wall with the shield emblem on it. It was on a maroon background and it was a proper viking ship with a little mast head and a dragons mouth.

Can you remember a special situation where the uniform was involved?

One day there was this horrible teacher and he decided in order to stop boys from fighting, they should all be made to wear short trousers. They were humiliated all the way from the age of eleven to sixteen, all the way through the school, to stop fighting. So they were made to feel like little boys and he was kind of serious about it. Boys had to wear short trousers, all the time, all the year around, even in the winter and the only time we were allowed to wear long trousers, was when we went out into the play ground.

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You wore the long trousers, when you went out to play, if it was cold and they would dictate when it was cold or not. You knew when it was cold. I remember my legs being red raw. I think they thought it was character building that you wore this uniform, being part of the team.

But you had to wear a tie and a jumper and it had to be a proper school uniform. You know there were shops around the country, specialised just in that, so the school could stipulate to parents, which set of school uniform you could wear. If they couldn't afford that, they would give them options to buy the proper stuff, which you could get through the local manufacturer or you could go for the kind of cheaper options. It was always the posh kids who would wear the blazers, so they would always get teased.

Usually the kids at the top got a lot of teasing and abuse, the kids, who were really poor got the abuse as well, because they were wearing anything. The teachers often picked on them, because they weren't wearing the proper stuff, and then often got sent home. It was really obvious they were from families who did not have enough money.

Especially as a young kid you got that right sense of justice and so you really associate kind of injustice with wearing this uniform. This kind of thing you had to wear was meant to be a leveller, everybody was meant to look the same, and feel the same. It created this kind of sense of parity, so that nobody was wearing more flashy clothes than anybody else.

I remember going to school initially, I was three or four and wearing these special clothes, I found it really exciting. You feel really smart, you feel like you're a part of the school. And if you grow older, especially at that school I went to, you begin to see, how older you get, the more fashion conscious you become, the more you try to express your identity and wear what you want. Through establishing yourself, and finding out, what you want to do and who you are, you establish an identity in sense of team spirit. In sense of working together, being part of something and that is the best part of it.

That is the thing, that levels everybody, because you meant to be wearing the same thing.











Processes of UniFORMation

They are hanging on the rack, school uniforms. They seem authentic, reviving the aura of British “elite” and “working class” colleges simultaneously. But something's wrong. Why do the school uniforms on the opposite wall seem withdrawn, still in a design stage, threads hanging loose and with no volume? Or have they already reached a state of disintegration? What is hidden behind the panels made of fabric? Or are they objects themselves?

The fabric provides a first approach. The various materials and colours of the chosen fabrics evoke experiences of the past. The woollen material in navy blue proves to be of universal use, classical and traditional. The brown wool has a tendency towards the extravagant, elitist. The pink satin finally carries you away into young girls' dreams.

For several years KR has been concerned with school uniforms. Having studied at Goldsmiths College London for one year, she couldn't but notice the children in school uniforms on the streets of London. She interviewed her London colleagues about their own experiences with their school uniform. Often for the first time, the interviewees talked for hours about what seemed so natural to them.

The starting point for KR is the visible, in this case the unusual sight of school uniforms in London's streets. Using a medium well known to her, she began to re-sew the school uniforms exactly as described by her interview partners. Her main focus was not a historical reconstruction of the actual uniforms, but to find a material and three-dimensional shape for the process of remembering.

The fragmentation of memory is converted into dresses with threads hanging loose, seams and hems sticking out, frayed, waiting to be completed or already falling apart. Shredded scraps of an incomplete memory, registered sketchily. These sketches of dresses are confronted with the uniforms crafted from memory. KR deliberately refrains from verifying these memories. It is not important therefore, whether the uniforms actually looked like this or not. They stand for the school uniform in the same way the stories of the interviewees exemplify experiences with the prescribed school uniform.

The grey backdrop unifies the finished uniforms with the sketches of uniforms. At the same time, the grey colour indicates the blur of memory these pieces are born of.

A narrow fabric corridor has been created in the rear of the exhibition space. Coated in pink silk, it lets you relive girlish dreams pregnant with of idols through the physical closeness to the satin. At the end of it is a photograph of Madonna's album “True Blue” from 1986, part of a memory fragment of one of the interviewees. This longing projection into different, idealised, female bodies - Madonna serving as a prime example - has been alluded to at the entrance of the silk corridor with a drawing of a corsage designed for Madonna.

Processes of growing up and of figuring out ones individual personality through clothes, the shaping of the individual body, have found an articulate expression here.

The silky airy dream is confronted by the memory of the school dress made of heavy green woollen fabric. The tiny desk evokes the whole dimension of upbringing and education, while extracts of or the interviews recreate the atmosphere of school days, the emotion and experience of wearing these clothes. What is difficult to put into words, finds its adequate expression in the quality of the materials. The heaviness of the green woollen fabric is palpable. This impression is enhanced visually through the coat-object, elongated through gravity, weighed down with concrete inside it. The bodily emotion of having to wear such a dark oppressive uniform becomes comprehensible.

It is no coincidence the artist didn't just sew a coat, but made it as a perfect fit for an object. The volume and the completeness of its shape make this object look like a body. The fact that the sleeves are sewn together is crucial for the impression and interpretation of this object. Thus they lose their function and complete the coat as an autonomous sculpture.

It seems that the medium of clothes intrinsically contains sociological issues. It might be the sensitive installation as well that lets erupt all aspects of the experience of dressing and moving in social spaces, of feeling comfortable and uncomfortable in one's second skin, moments of embarrassment and pride. This practice is not a sociological research though, but contains the reversal of a sociological approach, as founded by Georg Simmel¹ in his investigations on the Forms of Sociation.

The artist is not concerned with the role of these forms in the formation of society. Her research focuses on the reconstruction of a process of normalisation inside a human being. In her interviews she wants to learn how it felt to wear a prescribed school uniform. To understand how wearing these clothes so close to the body affects the perception of one's own body and self, how it changes self-consciousness, how it influences and shapes it. As a point of departure, the quotation of a participant is made

visible, it talks about the school uniform getting larger as one gets older while remaining the same all those years: You grow into it. The skirt of the uniform hangs in front of the wall, in front of the outline of a growing girl. It remains uncertain, if it talks about the growing into a social role too.

But the artistic translation of the "growing into" is more real than all that talk, than all those memories. The blue skirt of memories found its real shape and colour. The haptic stimulus of the woollen fabric enhances the sculptural, i.e., physical effect of the sewn object. The awareness of the absence of the body is heightened even more, emphasised through the presentation protruding into the space.

The actual execution of the challenge of a walkable installation, where the public becomes part of the work, shows the reflective range of the artist's practice. The analytical deconstruction of the fact of "normalisation through clothes" is thrown back to us, humans wearing clothes. It's impossible to keep an analytical distance to this topic. Clothes are the nearest means of expression to show who we are. How we dress is one of the identity-defining elements of our lives. It can be used creatively and freely, at the same time there is always the external view though, checking, categorising, assigning to groups based on clothes. It is impossible to escape this circle of normalisation and conditioning through clothes. While Pop Art uses methods of the serial and of disassociation to demonstrate the conditioning through the imagery of the world of consumerism, KR refers to the conditioning through clothes.

The title of the show "... sed vitae discimus" (... but to learn for life) is an invite, derived from a quote by Seneca², that is maybe better adapted to contemporary pedagogical concepts.

The formative motto of education of past days becomes visible in an enlarged school emblem, thereby taking more space and gaining more reality than the actual size emblem on the blazer.

On top of a stylised Viking boat in full sail, the motto “in adventure we die” is emblazoned on a sword, glorifying the college - turning it into an elite school producing heroes. It remains open whether if it is the actual motto or the memory of the participant playing a trick on him. The imprint of this motto is communicated without elusiveness through its exaggeration, the extreme enlargement and the sword-like hanging. The fabric is displayed like a double-edged sword, weighs, revealing both a glorifying and a frayed, tattered edge.

These logos are predestined for identification and conditioning. Translating memory in such a monstrous way emphasizes that there is no escape.

We follow these visualised social processes - processes of normalisation and formation, tracing the artistic research that dispenses with solutions, moral or pedagogical advice, but doesn't refrain from using a pinch of humour. The artist lowers the red pompon to the bottom, like a dropped hoary relic. But it still is a hat and does remain a hat. Or doesn't it?

Viola Michely

¹ Georg Simmel, “Sociology: Investigations on the Forms of Sociation” (1908). There, Simmel describes adornment with the following words: “Every property is an extension of personality, ... this expression occurs, earliest and most completely, in regard to our body.” A statement that applies, I believe, as well, to clothes. Simmel though understands clothes, contrary to adornment, not as property, because they show traces of use.

² With the sentence: “Non vitae, sed scholae discimus” (We do not learn for the school, but for life, Sen. Ep. adLuc. 106,12) Seneca opposed the roman philosophy schools of his time. The title is an abbreviated inversion of “Non scholae, sed vitae discimus” (Not for school, but for life we learn)





Do you know the uniform from your own childhood? Yes, I do.

From what time until what time did you had to wear one?

Until I was sixteen. I didn't wear one after that, because I went to sixth form college and you could wear your own clothes.

At what time did you had to start with the uniform?

When I was eight and I did not wear a uniform at kindergarten, I can not remember I ever wore a uniform before then.

And did the design change while you were passing different classes? No only different schools, not different classes. So every school had a different uniform.

Can you remember how it was to put on the uniform, did you like it, did you feel well in it?

I was always really bad in getting up in the morning and I still am. My mom was a district nurse at the time. She had an uniform too, that was blue, her blue nurses uniform. And she had to get up in the morning and go to work. And to get me out of bed, the night before, she would put all of our clothes on the radiator. And she would wake me in the morning, with a cup of tee and she will throw a little kitten on my bed. So the kitten would wake me up. And then she would say: I'm going to raise you to get ready. So we each had a radiator and we were running to the hall and we put on our uniforms as quickly as possible. So it was quite fun, she made it fun. So, I remember very vividly getting dressed.

Did you ever thought about your clothes or was it just normal to wear the uniform? It was normal to wear the uniform, very normal.

And does this change by the age of puberty? When you grew up?

It did change, but I had to wear a particularly horrible uniform when I was a teenager. It was a convent, a beautiful house and it was run by nuns. You bought this school uniform at Harrods. I remember going with my sister to buy the uniform and it was so expensive because it was specially made.









And that was a green skirt, very wide, long, green skirt with light brown socks, with a white shirt and a green jumper with yellow piping around the v. And you had to wear a green barrett with a red pompon. When you left school and if you tried to change into your own clothes, the nuns would check you before you got on the school bus, to make sure you had your school uniform on: you had your socks pulled up, you had your blazer on and if you did not, you would taken up to matron, who's the school nurse, and she would have spare blazers, spare hats ...

I was fourteen, when I went there. Fourteen to sixteen. And I hated it. I took my shirt in and I took my skirt up, I rolled my socks down and each time you did that, the nuns would see you, they would take you to the matron and she would make you wear a very large long skirt and make you pull your socks up.

That winter coat was a very thick hundred percent woollen green long down to the ankle one. Because it was an all girl' s school and it was a convent, a catholic school when you got the bus home and you walked from the bus stop to your house you will get all of the children from the local school shouting at you making comments. The school was on a big hill, and they shout: oh, the horse on the hill!

To go to this school I had to do an exam. At the state school you do not do exams, but when you go to private schools you have to do exams. And they only accept you, when you pass. So I had to do an extra hard exam and unfortunately I passed. So they paid my fees for the first year and a half. My mother said you must go, because it's a privileged position.

Did you ever thought about your clothes or was it just normal to wear it? No I thought about it every minute of the day.

And did you ever complained about it? All the time.

Did the nuns wear the same one?

Yeah you had two different types of uniforms for the nuns, you had the older nuns, and they wore the black one, very, very old fashioned. But the younger nuns, there wore a more contemporary uniform, they

wore just like a green skirt and a brown jumper similar to the school uniform. And they would wear sometimes a green habit on they head or they just had short hair.

In a way it was more equal, but their uniform was a uniform to suppress their sexuality, because they were married to god. So they were very neutral, you know, obviously non provocative. But it was like all these girls as well had to wear the same sort of uniform and it was again, when you were reaching puberty, you know you don't want to look like a nun.

And did you ever change some parts of the uniform? Was it allowed to sew or stitch something on it?

Or to wear some own clothes like a shirt together with the uniform to make it more individual?

No, you weren't allowed, but we did.

You would massacre you skirt, so you would desperately try to make it thinner and higher...

Yeah and wear very big jumpers, because it was cool to wear a big baggy jumpers, but you would be taken up to matron and she would find you a long flat skirt. The same with dying your hair. I remember I had a friend who had very black hair. In her first week at school one of the nuns marched her up to matron and she said: this girl is dying her hair. And matron washed her hair and washed her hair and washed her hair to try wash out the dye and it wasn't dyed.

And they used to carry around grips, hairgrips, little black hairgrips, and you had to wear your hair back. But if you wore your hair down or it was messy there was this one nun who would come down and she would do the most embarrassing: she would give you a centre parting, pull your hair back and she would grip your hair to a hat, make it stay perfect.

The more you stood out and tried to be individual the more they would not like you. I had a friend who was really rebellious and she used to cut her hair really short at the sides.

Every day she came into school she had this solid hair sprayed Mohikan. She would be taken up to matron; matron would wash her hair and washed it down, every day!



Was it easy for you to go with the rules of the school or more difficult?
It was difficult.

If you are different or there is any difference than it pulls you out of the group and it makes you different and people pick on difference, children especially like if your ears stick out or if you wear a different uniform. And you are in a town that supplies mostly one school, state school than you are walking through the town and you have this big old school uniforms say, you are different, it's like exhausting, you know. It's funny, for me when I was really young I didn't want to be different from anyone else. Then when you're a teenager you start to be different, you start to find your own identity and that's the time, you know, wearing a school uniform like that it's quite hard.

And how looked the clothes you liked to wear at home?

At that age I was really into Madonna, I really loved Madonna. My first painting I made when I was about fifteen featured the cover of Madonna's True Blue Album. And I wanted to be like Madonna.

Did you think the school wanted to educate pupils by wearing the uniform?

I mean it was all part of the philosophy of the school, really. They had quite a strict philosophy of what they wanted to do for young woman. It was very much to bring up a young good catholic woman. Their uniform was their mark.

And can you remember military associations belonging to the uniform?

It was a very strict religious school, that there were very strong associations with that kind of thrills. Before you could get on the bus, your uniforms would be checked, that's quite militaristic, it's like checking your rifle in the army if you go out.

There were so many rules and regulations applied to other parts of the school like no running in the corridor, certain times of praying, certain times to go church...

So it was just like a thing that they could control.

Yeah it was totally controlling. It was definitely to do with control, completely. Especially young woman, you know.





Did you have to wear a school uniform?

I had to wear a school uniform between the ages of nine and twelve and again until I left there with sixteen. After that and before there was no uniform.

How did your Uniform looked like?

It was purple and gold and I think it was supposed to go together. But it looked horrible. I thought already it looked like this kind of catholic colours. So it was a grey uniform, just a tie in that colours and I guess there was a blazer and a jacket, but I did not wear it.

Was it a private or a states school?

It was just a catholic state school, middle schools are quite small, quite at the outskirts.

And can you remember the first day you had to wear one?

I do not remember wearing it as much as I remember having to go buy it with my mom. Having to go to this really boring shop in the middle of the town, just specialized in school uniforms. Yeah, depressing!

Like all the grey stuff and really cheap, like grey socks ...

Can you remember the fabric quality of the purple one?

The tie was really nasty, but yeah, like a thin jumper with a v-neck, and I think grey narrow trousers. There were really horrible. Shorts as well in summer time, I ever wanted to get rid of my grey shorts.

Couple of kids wear them all the year, even it was freezing.

And grey socks and a shirt, it must be a white shirt, with a grey v-neck pullover. It was grey and the school colours were purple and gold, you probably only have that on your tie.

I remember going to the high school and pass by the grammar school, they had different blazers: if you are the head of sports, the sports prefect, you had to wear a yellow and blue stripy like boating jacket, so obviously if you are that kind of kid you would get enough I suppose.





So I was glad that I never went into the blazers hierarchy or the world of blazers. I supposed I was quite lucky with uniforms, I didn't have to do any of those: no caps or jackets as I really got in trouble.

Did you like yours?

No of course not!

Did the teachers look at the uniform?

It was like an inspection, like an inspection in middle school. Everyone gets to school, of the school bus and runs around the playground falling over for ten minutes, then you had to line up, for your respective classrooms and your teachers in the front of the line.

And they were checking: they would just call the names, they call the register and if anyone's looking different or does anything stupid, than you immediately "gain" trouble, otherwise you go straight to your class. I think that was probably the game every break time.

If you would have the chance to create a uniform, how would this look like?

It would be yellow and gold.

Yellow and gold?

Yellow and gold!

Where is this gold?

Oh, I think it would be in sort of batches and ribbons, that if you go to your homework, you get a batch and you have to wear it all the time.

And kind of gold trims over the trousers and gold on the dress and the skirt. And, all gold sports outfit, like winners on the sports court. They will be dressed all shiny - they will be gold and shiny. They look fantastic, like Spartans walking out there into the arena.

The yellow and gold one, probably is the answer, everyone has a little bit glow, splendid in their lives for a few hours a day.





From what time until what time did you had to wear your uniform?

From when I was eleven till when I was sixteen I had to wear a uniform and exactly the same one for five years.

So everybody had the same uniform?

Yeah, everyone had the same. People all wore school uniform, but these were always different for each school, a different colour or a different style.

And can you give a detailed description about your old school uniform, how it looked like?

It was dark blue, and we had to wear a dark blue skirt, with a pleated front, and a blue jumper with a kind of red stripe around the neck and a white shirt and I think black or blue socks or tights, but it had to be like long socks.

And can you remember the garment it was made of?

The jumper was a sort of wool with a v-neck and the skirt was synthetic, quite thick, practical material.

Did you like to wear it?

Maybe right at the beginning it was quite a novelty and I used to kind of like it. But I think really fast I even did not think about it, I just put it on everyday. Put it one and take it off, when I go home.

I remember the skirts were really ugly and everybody was like trying to make them shorter and tighter. You know all the square girls, there had really big ugly, buggy skirts. And all of the kind of cool girls sewed down the side to make them tighter. Some girls had really short skirts and there were not allowed. But, yes the skirts were not so nice.

Purely from a practical point of view, maybe it is useful: if you do not have a lot of money, you have to buy like one uniform and then you wear it all day, everyday and it does work out cheaper.

I had one school skirt for the whole five years. And when I started it was huge and I just kept growing and this thing just fitted ... that was everyone did: you just kept the same one.

Maybe the jumpers changed sometimes, because they got holes or whatever, but the skirt, it never wears through, it never breaks, it never ... so I just had the one for five years.



... sed vitae discimus

hat away!



Wandobjekt: diverse Stoffe, Holz, Metall, CD-Player, Kopfhörer, Videoprojektor, Video,
wall-object: diverse fabrics, wood, metal, cd player, headphones, video projector, video,
Installationsgröße, *installation-dimensions: 2,50 x 1,75 m*



Blick in den Ausstellungsraum,
view into the showroom



Wandobjekt: diverse Stoffe, Holz, Metall, CD-Player, Kopfhörer,
wall-object: diverse fabrics, wood, metal, cd player, headphones;
1,23 x 1,05 x 0,07 m

world of blazer



Objekt: diverse Stoffe, Garn, Volumenvlies, Metallrohr und Metallaufhängung, *object: several fabrics, thread, interface, metal tube, chain suspension, variable* Installationshöhe, *variable installation height; 2,60 x 2,90 m*
Wandanstrich: Dispersionsfarbe, *wall paint: emulsion paint; 9,20 x 1,70 m*



Installationsansicht: Objekte und Wandanstrich,
installation sight: objects and wall painting;
9,00 x 1,70 m



Serie von Wandobjekten: Metall, diverse Stoffe, Garn, Stickerei,
serial wall-objects: metal, several fabrics, thread, embroidery;
0,47 x 0,76 x 0,08 m, 0,65 x 0,10 x 0,04 m, 1,35 x 0,62 x 0,20 m,
0,56 x 0,74 x 0,08 m
Wandanstrich: Dispersionsfarbe, *wall paint: emulsion paint;*
9,00 x 1,70 m



Nahaufnahmen,
close-up views



Wandobjekt: Metall, Stoffe, Garn, Stickerei,
wall-object: metal, several fabrics, thread, embroidery;
0,62 x 0,76 x 1,40 m
Wandanstrich: Dispersionsfarbe,
wall paint: emulsion paint; 9,20 x 1,70 m



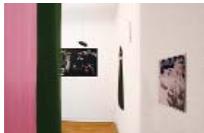
Nahaufnahme Stickerei,
close-up view embroidery

... sed vitae discimus

horses of the hill



Raumteilung: Polyester, Metall,
partitioning: polyester, metal; 3,40 x 4,00 m
Zeichnung, Holzrahmen,
drawing, wooden framework; 0,43 x 0,33 m



Raumteilung: Polyester, Wollstoff, CD-Player, CD,
partitioning: polyester, woollen material, cd player, cd;
3,50 x 4,00 x 0,30 m
Foto, Metall, *photo, metal*; 0,40 x 0,40 m
Wandobjekt: Stoff, Holz, Metall,
wall-object: fabric, wood, metal; 0,88 x 1,43 x 0,03 m
hängendes Objekt: diverse Stoffe, Schaumstoff, Wolle,
hanging object: diverse fabric, foamed material, wool;
0,30 m Durchmesser, *diameter*, 0,68 m
Wandtafel: Holz, Tafellack, Kreide, Metall, *blackboard: wood,*
blackboard varnish, chalk, metal; 1,10 x 2,40 m



Blick in den abgetrennten Ausstellungsraum,
view into the seperated showroom



Nahaufnahme hängendes Objekt: Stoff, Holz, Metall, Zement,
close-up view hanging object: fabric, wood, metal, cement;
1,46 x 0,50 x 0,41 m



Raumteilung: Polyester, Metall, *partitioning: polyester, metal*;
3,40 x 4,00 m
Raumteilung: Polyester, Wollstoff, Metall, CD-Player, CD,
partitioning: polyester, woollen material, metal, cd-player, cd;
photo, metal; 3,50 x 4,00 x 0,30 m
Foto, Metall, *photo, metal*; 0,40 x 0,40 m



Nahaufnahme,
close-up view



Raumteilung: Polyester, Wollstoff, CD-Player, CD,
partitioning: polyester, woollen material, cd player, cd;
3,50 x 4,00 x 0,30 m
hängendes Objekt: Stoff, Holz, Metall, Zement,
hanging object: fabric, wood, metal, cement; 1,46 x 0,50 x 0,41 m
Wandobjekt: diverse Stoffe, Holz,
wall-object: several fabrics, wood; 1,05 x 0,60 x 0,07 m
Schultisch, Stühle, CD-Player, CD, Kopfhörer, Papier, *school*
furniture, cd player, cd, headphones, booklet; 1,30 x 0,80 x 0,75 m



hängendes Objekt: diverse Stoffe, Schaumstoff, Wolle, Metall,
hanging object: several fabrics, foamed material, wool, metal;
Durchmesser *diameter* 0,30 m, Länge, *length*, 0,68 m



Wandobjekt: Stoff, Holz, Metall,
wall-object: fabric, wood, metal; 0,88 x 1,43 x 0,03 m

... sed vitae discimus

yellow-gold



Blick auf den seitlichen Ausstellungsraum,
Stoffe, Papier, Holz, Metall, Fotografien,
left handside view:
fabrics, paper, wood, metal, photos;
4,14 m hoch, *high* x 4,25 m breit, *wide*



Installation mit vier Objekten und vier Fotografien:
Stoff, Fäden, Holz, Metall, Fotografien,
installation implies four objects and four photos:
fabrics, thread, wood, metal, photos,
Installationsgröße, *installation size:* 4,00 x 0,90 m

... the only skirt



Installation: diverse Stoffe, Metall, Holz, Kopfhörer, CD-Player,
CD, Papierzeichnung,
installation: several fabrics, metal, wood, headphones, cd player,
cd, paper drawing,
Installationsgröße, *installation size:* 2,10 x 2,10 m



Installationsdetail, *installation detail:*
Objekt: Stoff, Holz, Metall,
object: fabric, wood, metal; 0,39 x 0,97 x 0,04 m
Fotografie, *photo;* 0,15 x 0,21 m

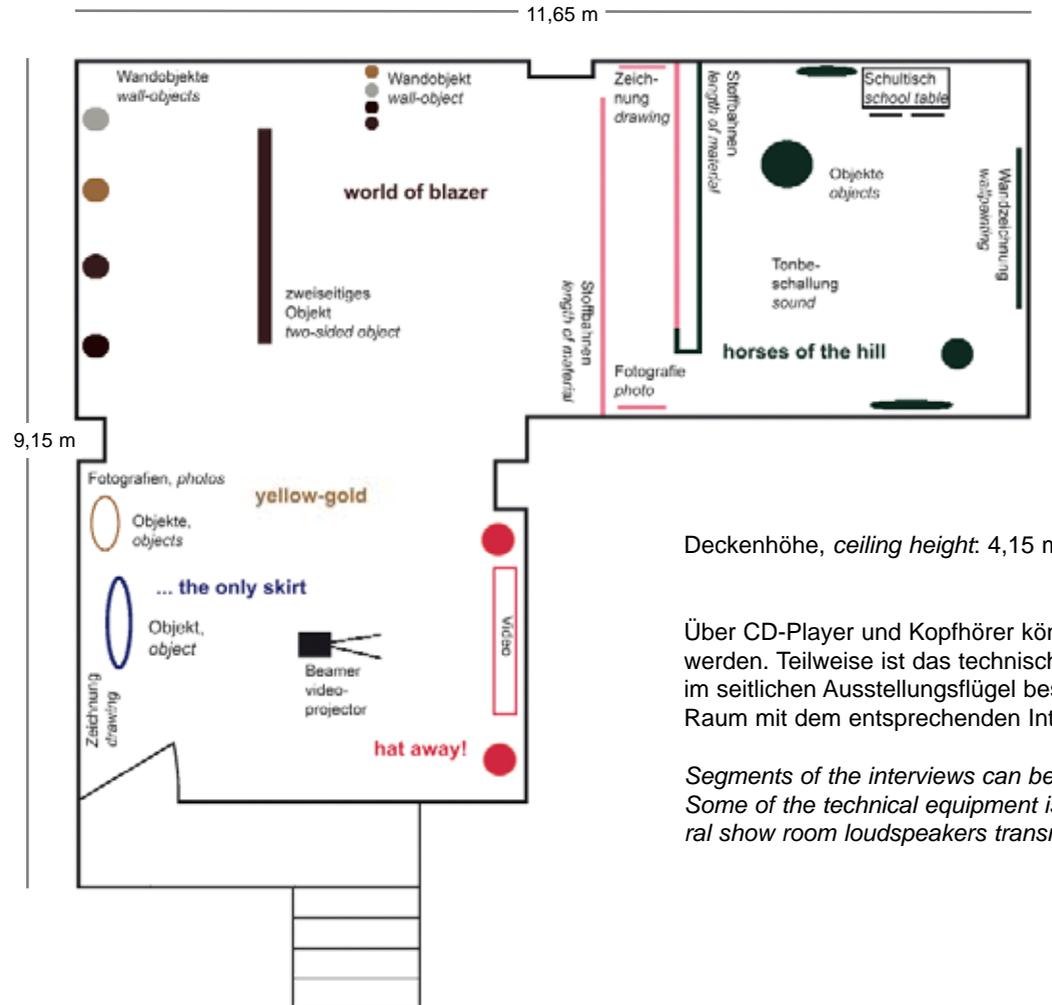


Installationsdetail, *installation detail:*
Fotografie, *photo;* 0,15 x 0,21 m
Objekt: Stoff, Volumenvlies, Holz, Metall,
object: fabric, interface, wood, metal;
0,37 x 0,70 x 0,04 m



Installationsdetail, *installation detail:*
diverse Stoffe, Metall, Holz, Kopfhörer, CD-Player,
CD, Papierzeichnung, *several fabrics, metal, wood,*
headphones, cd player, cd, paper drawing,
Installationsgröße, *installation size:* 2,10 x 2,10 m

Grundriss der Moltkerei, Köln



Deckenhöhe, ceiling height: 4,15 m

Über CD-Player und Kopfhörer können die Interviewausschnitte verfolgt werden. Teilweise ist das technische Equipment in die Objekte integriert, im seitlichen Ausstellungsflügel beschallen Lautsprecher den abgetrennten Raum mit dem entsprechenden Interview.

Segments of the interviews can be followed by cd player and headset. Some of the technical equipment is integrated into the objects. In the lateral show room loudspeakers transmit the sound of the respective interview.

Die Ausstellung fand statt vom 25.Juni bis 04.Juli 2009

Kathrin Rabenort

Lebenslauf

curriculum vitae

- 1965 geboren in Kreuztal-Kredenbach, NRW, *born in Kreuztal-Kredenbach, Germany*
- 1984-89 Studium der Sozialpädagogik, Diplom, staatl. Anerkennung, GH Siegen, *studies of social education, graduation and state-acknowledgement, University Siegen*
- 1990-97 Studium der Freien Kunst, Kunsthochschule Kassel bei Prof. Urs Luethi, *study of Fine Art, College of Art, Kassel*
- 1997 Diplom Freie Kunst, *Bachelor of Arts, Fine Art*
- 1998-1999 eineinhalb jähriger Atelier- und Arbeitsaufenthalt, Amsterdam *one and a half year studio and working residence, Amsterdam*
- 1999-2000 Master of Fine Art, Goldsmith College, London *Master of Arts, Fine Art, Goldsmith College, London*
- seit 2001 lebt und arbeitet in Köln, *lives and works in Cologne*

Stipendien und Förderungen

scholarship and grant

- 2009 Projektförderung der Karin Abt-Straubinger Stiftung, Stuttgart *project-grant Karin Abt-Straubinger foundation, Stuttgart*
- 2009 Projektförderung der Erwin u. Gisela von Steiner Stiftung, München *project-grant Erwin and Gisela von Steiner foundation, Munich*

Stipendien und Förderungen

scholarship and grant

- 1999-2000 einjähriges Stipendium des Deutschen Akademischen Austauschdienstes-Jahresaufenthalt, London *scholarship DAAD, one year residence, London*
- 1998-1999 Jahresstipendium der Hessischen Kulturstiftung für Amsterdam, Wiesbaden, *one year scholarship Hessische Kulturstiftung (foundation), Wiesbaden*
- 1996-1997 Förderstipendium Otto-Braun-Stiftung, Melsungen *scholarship Otto-Braun-Stiftung (foundation), Melsungen*

Einzelausstellungen und Ausstellungsbeteiligungen (Auswahl)

selected exhibitions and group shows

- 2010 „self-motoric“, Sportmuseum, Köln (E, K)
- 2009 „ar-th-ro-po-da“, superbien, Berlin (E)
„... sed vitae discimus“, Moltkerei, Köln (E, K)
„neue Arbeiten“, BBK Köln (G)
- 2008 „Backlands“, Ausstellungsprojekt, Köln-London (E / G)
- 2007 „Recycling Kunstpreis“, Museum Marta, Herford (G)
„Turminstallation“, Martin-Luther-Kirche, Köln (E)
- 2006 „Vikings, Falcons, Unicorns...“, Fotoraum, Köln (E)
„Farewell Gostenhof“, Kohlenhof Kunstverein e.V., Nürnberg (G)
- 2005 „mp-I / transfer“, m-projects galerie mirko mayer, Köln (G)
„horses on the hill“, Kunstwerke, Köln (E)

Einzelausstellungen und Ausstellungsbeteiligungen (Auswahl)

selected exhibitions and group shows

- 2004 „Trendwände“, Kunstraum, Düsseldorf (G)
„Körperbilder und Projektionen“, Shedhalle Tübingen (G)
„Utopien“, Bunker Tumulka, München (G)
- 2003 „Firmament“, 150m Kubik, Köln (G)
„Paradies“, Alexanderplatz, Berlin (K)
„modemorphosen“, Südflügel Kulturbahnhof Kassel (E)
- 2002 „insel halt“, büro orange im Aktionsforum Praterinsel
Laboratorium, München (G)
„lovely“, Kohlenhof Kunstverein e.V., Nürnberg (G)
- 2001 „Kunstwechsel“, Temporärer Ausstellungsraum, Siegen (G)
„Assembly“, Atelier- und Ausstellungsprojekt, London (G)
- 2000 „inside-out“, Goldsmith College, London (G, K)
„Window-Shopping“, Ausstellung in W1-Schaufenstern
London, Teil der London Biennale (G)
„Performance-Event“, Trade Apartment, London (G)
- 1999 „Ladenkastenprojekt“, Galerie Phöbus, Rotterdam (G)
- 1998 „mehrwerte“, Stellwerk, Kassel (E)
- 1997 „Traumfabrik“, Salzmann Factory, Kassel (E)
- 1996 „Model-Life“, Kulturbahnhof, Kassel (E)
- 1995 „Goldschürfer“, Freibank, Kassel (E)
- 1994 „Schöner Wohnen“, Produzentengalerie, Kassel (G)

Bibliographie

bibliography

- „Kathrin Rabenort“, Einzelkatalog, 64 Seiten,
Texte von Thomas Heyden und Suhail Malik, herausgegeben mit Mitteln
der Hessischen Kulturstiftung, 2005
- „Paradies“, Ausstellungskatalog, Hrsg. Römer&Römer, Berlin, 2003
- „Goldsmith 2000“, Ausstellungskatalog, Hrsg. Department Visual Arts,
Goldsmith College, London, 2000
- „Das Verschwinden der Kunst wird aus gesellschaftlichen Gründen auf
unbestimmte Zeit verschoben“, Katalog zur Gruppenausstellung im Kunst-
verein Kassel, 1998
- „Bewegung“, Hrsg. Städtisches Museum Korbach, Ausstellungskatalog
zum Kunstwettbewerb, Juli 1995

Lehrtätigkeit als Künstlerin

teaching activity as an artist

- 2005-2007 künstlerische Mitarbeiterin, Universität zu Köln,
Institut für Kunst, *artistic assistant, art department,*
University cologne
- seit *since* Lehraufträge Universität zu Köln und FH Düsseldorf, FB
Design, Plastisches Gestalten, *university teaching position,*
University Cologne and department design, University of
Applied Sciences, Düsseldorf

Vorträge

lectures about own art work

- 2008 „Kathrin Rabenort“, Vorstellung eigener künstlerischer
Arbeiten, ev. FH Berlin
- 2007 „Kathrin Rabenort“, Vorstellung eigener künstlerischer
Arbeiten, Mozarteum Salzburg
„Skulptur, Raum, Fläche, Textil“, Vorstellung eigener künstleri-
scher Arbeiten, Universität Paderborn

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