

Altered Men's suits or Penelope and the Unraveling of History, 1992

I am interested in clothing as skins, which project outwards as well as inwards. By taking apart the male business suit I try to discover or analyze the "pattern" on which it is constructed. At the same time the metamorphoses are an evolution of the suits into something else. **Metamorphoses** suggests, that it might happen either by nature, taking its course, or through magic or art, I like the mixture of a bit of both.

By taking the suit apart, graphic contours of patterns become visible, the language (the logical structure) of the suit. The pattern for an arm is always similar and recognizable to any pattern maker, tailor or seamstress. I ask myself: what is the difference/or connection between the flat pattern, the sleeve, the visible arm and the arm underneath the skin. How do they influence or define each other. There are other ways to make clothing. Big complex ideas are held together apparently seamless or invisible. But in fact, there are seems, which can be undone.

The flattening out of the suits interests me and its relation between the structured surface, created through the woven fabric, layered onto the body of the person. Woven materials are grids and usually (in our industrially produced fabrics) repeated endlessly. Men's suiting fabrics are complex combinations of different colored threads, which produce interesting visual effects, but without drawing attention to themselves. Initially I was mainly concerned with rupturing the structures themselves, but it evolved into an overlaying of new patterns onto the old ones, destroying the old ones in the process. This work is slow and this is very apparent and the time doing the work allows for thoughts to travel far and wide.

I am also thinking about my work in relation to Naomi Schor's book **Reading in Detail** 1989. By focusing on arbitrary or insignificant details, I try to defy the logics of "good" design. By examining the suit thread by thread, I force myself (and the viewer) to consider apparently irrelevant details, to lose complete overview, and to understand new patterns of logic that are in the process of evolving and not yet fixed. I expect a different picture to emerge, i.e. a Metamorphoses! Similar ideas are reflected in feminist literary criticism: **The Voice of the Shuttle is Ours** by Janis Joplin Klindienst and **Arachnology** by Nancy Miller (publ. in Poetics of Gender 1988).

The idea of **metamorphoses** comes also from Ovid's stories, held together by the thread of metamorphoses which occur in each. Many of them are about weaving - the story of Arachne, Philomela, the daughter of Minyas, Penelope and even Ariadne, all women who challenge fate through their weaving, spinning or use of a thread.