

Jan Skovgård

"10 Current Works"

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Roots



Roots (no. 4), 2011

Digital C-print (lambda)

Comment: See description Roots on the next page



Roots

Grab the stalk and pull. There are those that do not give in. Some may not surrender. Some will break... Others come with roots.

Flap the soil against the soil and flip it. Turn it upside down. Will it grow again?

It does not look like the green luxuriant and wide open spaces of your dreams. But it is this kind of "stuff" meadows are made of.

Backwards capability has been left in benefit of possibility. Look less backwards and you will be looking forward.

Roots is part of my Stella project, nowadays four partly empty sites in Northern Jutland.

Aarhus, November 2011.

Link to more works from this series:

<http://www.janskovgard.dk/wordpress/?cat=17>

RE-rokke



RE-rokke (no. 1), 2011
Digital C-print (lambda)

Comment: See description RE-rokke on the next page

**RE-rokke III**

I am aware that it looks like some kind of a carnival rod. But it is not.
 So much does not look like what it really is.
 It does not look like what I want it to, either.
 I have a problem – in this respect it is alike.

I am aware that I do not do quite what I want to do. Something is left unreleased. Is it visible?

It is called Horsetail or Bottlebrush. In Danish: Padderokke.
 A plant that, as it seems to me, is left out of what is generally to be found in the open land.
 Perhaps this is why I bring it on ...
 At this point to me something unspeakable.
 At least I have a couple of references that I like to display.

Reference no. 1:

In 1993 I held an exhibition – Fluid – together with Klaus Christensen.

Link: <http://www.janskovgard.dk/test28.php>

The invitation card displayed an illustration from a popular scientific book from my childhood. You saw a mammoth about to drown in a lake of asphalt, pterosaurs circling above.

The exhibition consisted of a series of small coloured puddles on the floor, – red, yellow, blue, green and pink. Small lakes in holes having been deepened into the floor through the years.

The fluids were mouthwash, skin tonic, descalers, insecticides and other sorts of drugstore merchandise brought home from a travel to the US.

On the wall pieces of texts, – small so that you had to stand close without plodding in the puddles. The words – pompous like commercials –came from the packings of the products.

Reference no. 2:

A painting by the Russian artist Olga Rozanova titled Untitled (Green Stripe).

It was painted in 1917.

Do you happen to know this one?

The subject is a vertical central green stripe, white on both sides.

It is one of those pictures that I keep in my active vocabulary.

I do not know where it can be seen but in the '70s it was part of the George Costakis Collection.

Exactly how it became the property of the Greek, I do not remember, but as I recall, it was found left in a closet somewhere in the former Soviet Union.

As tunes changed and winds blew from another direction towards Sibiria, only two possibilities were left: to pack up your things or to flee.

RE-rokke forms part of my Stella project, four big building sites in the Northern Jutland.

I found the first Horsetail, when cutting down some trees.

Later, looking more consciously for the plant, I became aware of the amount of plastic littering around.

More litter than Horsetail. (smiley)

At a time I was on my way moving out of a certain key, working with the idea of including this plastic in the series – referring analogously to Fluid.

I did not include it anyhow...

Link to more works from this series:

<http://www.janskovgard.dk/wordpress/?cat=16>

RE-flower III



RE-flower III (no. 4), 2011

Digital C-print (lambda)

Comment: See description RE-flower III on the next page



RE-flower III

Did you find out what was the name of that flower?

Those were, roughly, the words to the person closest to me some early morning.

Tancy was the answer – but now I will write it down. Meaning: I will look it up at some later moment.

The conversation above displayed as a prologue, I will get right to the point:

It is not the flower as a species that triggers me. Rather it is the flower being a flower.

And the fact that in spite of its nature – it is fleeting, yellow for only a couple of weeks during the early autumn – it was there when I needed it.

Or it happened to be around – and I found out that I needed it: one can bloom while one is leaning.

It is a kind of weed.

Weed is a common term for plants we have not deliberately developed and refined. Flowers which turn up at places where we did not specifically want them to.

The term is a cultural stigma.

We also call them "wild flowers", a synonym depending on the fact that they only show up in the open country.

In case they turn up in our gardens, we judge them: weeds.

Tancy is a weed.

It has a spicy flavour (like cat's pee).

But it is beautiful.

I think it is beautiful – *leaning*.

The series is part of or rather is connected to my Stella project of five big building sites in Northern Jutland.

The wooden blocks and the sticks come from this place.

By the way, the five sites have been reduced to four: I had to sell one of them.

Link to more works from this series:

<http://www.janskovgard.dk/wordpress/?cat=15>

RE-thinking II



RE-thinking II (no. 2), 2011

Digital C-print (lambda)

Comment: See description RE-thinking II on the next page



RE-thinking II

Destruction is part of my practice. It has been for quite a while.

In the beginning not deliberately, but if one's mind is organized in a way that materialization is an ultimate, – thinking having been implemented, a necessity in recognizing me and you, this will result in quite a lot of objects as time goes by.

With no market for this kind of products, as in my case, the stuff accumulates.

Destruction becomes a necessity, some sort of personal hygiene.

And this is where you find yourself poking around, – kinetically as well as genetically.

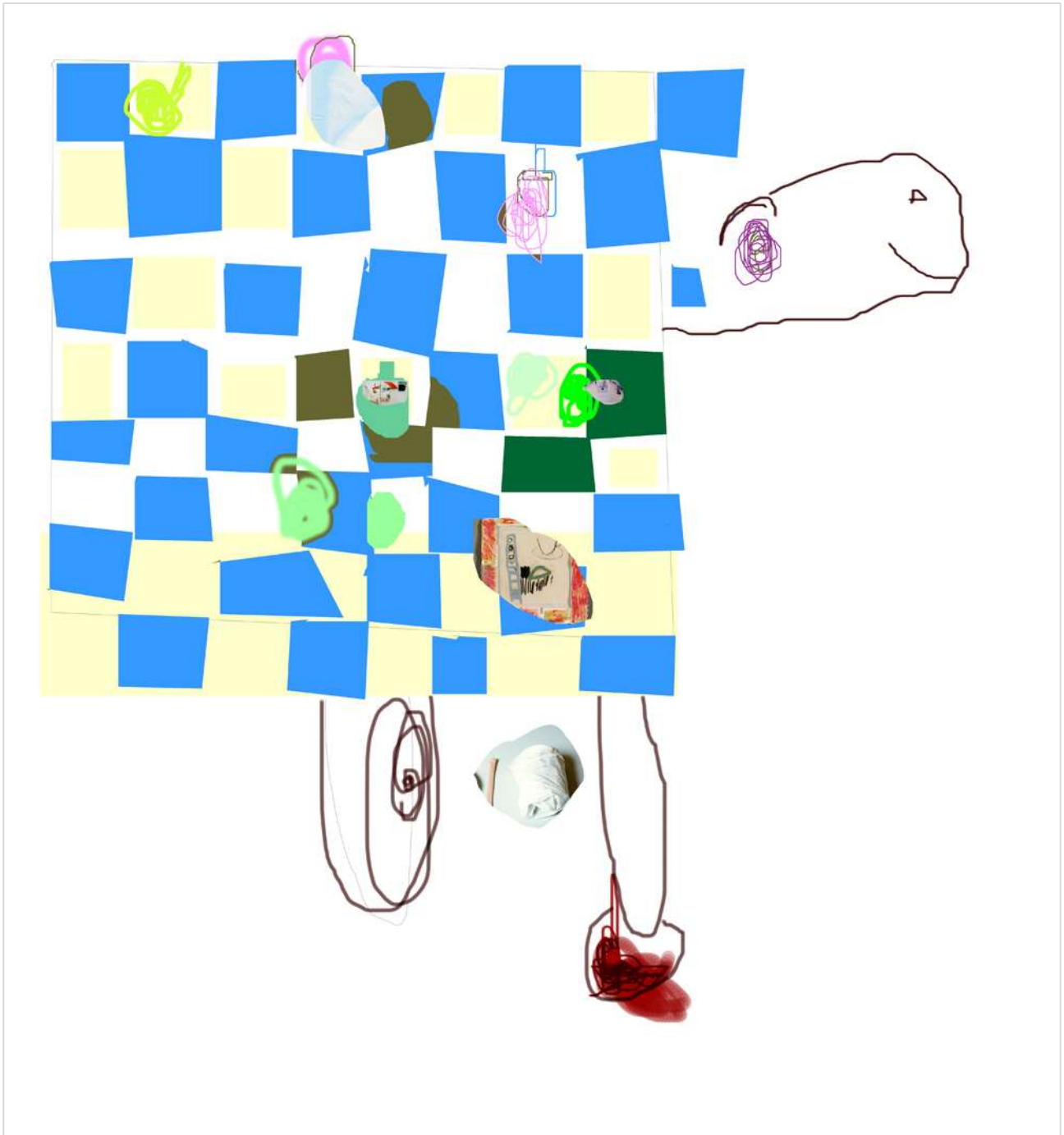
Nothing being formulated, rather it should be regarded a vegetating behaviour with a latent and intrinsic constructiveness. For often unexpectedly – yet hardly independently – something happens.

A ray of light touches upon a bent nail.

Link to more works from this series:

<http://www.janskovgard.dk/wordpress/?cat=14>

RE-mis



RE-mis (no. 6), 2011
Digital C-print (lambda)

Comment: See description RE-mis on the next page



RE-mis

Remis is the Danish word for the drawn game in chess. It means that the match ended in a draw.
Chess is a game of endless possibilities.

As a child I played chess with my father. I also played chess in a club located in a building called "Home of Youngsters". I do not recall how I ended up in that place or if I was a member. I went there together with a friend from school but most of the members were grown-ups.

I have also played chess with my son, Thor Emil. He has been playing school chess for a couple of years and he has won several cups. They were quite generous handing out cups :)
Not so long ago Thor asked me to play a game of chess with him. He had just found some missing chess pieces – meaning that our chess game had for some time been incomplete.
Somehow, we did not manage to get a game going ...

A friend of mine plays chess in a chess club.

One summer's day at his place – which happens to be close to the five Stella sites of mine – I found a book of games of chess. 1. E4e5 2. Lc4 Sc6 3. Dh5 Sf6 ...

The book was lying in his bathroom for the purpose of silent moments in which others might read a crime novel or a newspaper.

Quite impressive ...

But it is the same "game-of-chess-reader"-friend who has constructed this bathroom in a way so that one must stride over the toilet to get to the shower. And when you sit on the toilet there is hardly any room for your legs.

I have yet another experience with chess:

When I ran into a depression and was admitted to the hospital, I spent the first couple of days at a scaring ward. The outer doors were locked and the common areas shrouded in heavy smoke. Everything had in an abandoning way come to a standstill and patients as well as staff hung out in a smoky community.

But an English speaking man asked me if I was a chess player.

We played a game. He was not a novice, I simply just managed to draw better and he lost.

He was visibly impressed and urged me at several occasions to play again but we never got that far.

I was totally confused and had no energy. No matter how it had happened, I just did not believe that it was something that could be repeated.

A couple of days later I was transferred to another ward.

Now, the RE-mis series is not literally about chess. It should rather be regarded as metaphorical of some general human conditions.

Who does not recall a situation with a promising beginning that– in spite of a good strategy – developed into something quite different?

Nobody wants things ending up in a draw, unsettled... at least not as a starting-point.

But as history builds on, as time goes by, things may develop in ways that make remis – the draw – turn up as a parameter.

Maybe even as an aim.

In retrospective, remis – the draw – could be something very positive.

Remis could be a victory.

Link to more works from this series:

<http://www.janskovgard.dk/wordpress/?cat=10>

RE-flower



RE-flower (no. 1), 2010

Digital C-print (lambda)

Comment: See description RE-flower on the next page



RE-flower

Coltsfoot is my favourite flower.

It has not always been like that. It was not like that two weeks ago.

In fact, I never had a favourite flower.

But there it was, in the sunshine.

I link it to something primeval, – the way in which the leaves are almost part of the stalk.

This is perhaps what I like.

Perhaps it means spring.

The present bouquet is for you and it is flanked by four of my paintings, – details from four of my paintings:
A re-painting from 1990 in which the motif is a number of deconstructed drawings from the project LIGE a year before.

A watercolour painting from the Angels series dated 1995. A (kind of) "dogma" project with me painting – at the same time – with and on the same material.

A handicap painting from the time I spent in Viborg (2004) and, finally, another re-painting from the Vipalee series (2007). I still recognize one of my frame-objects with baking tins from the '80's...

The photographic RE-flower series is not about flowers.

Rather, it is about flowering.

Very many things indicate that humans blossom only once.

Indeed, man is a perennial but do we all blossom? And how many of us are able to blossom several times?

As an artist I have had an unusual course.

I broke down.

Reality is made up of scars and age.

Behind RE-flower, behind the beautiful appearances of these materializations, you sense dancing lines:

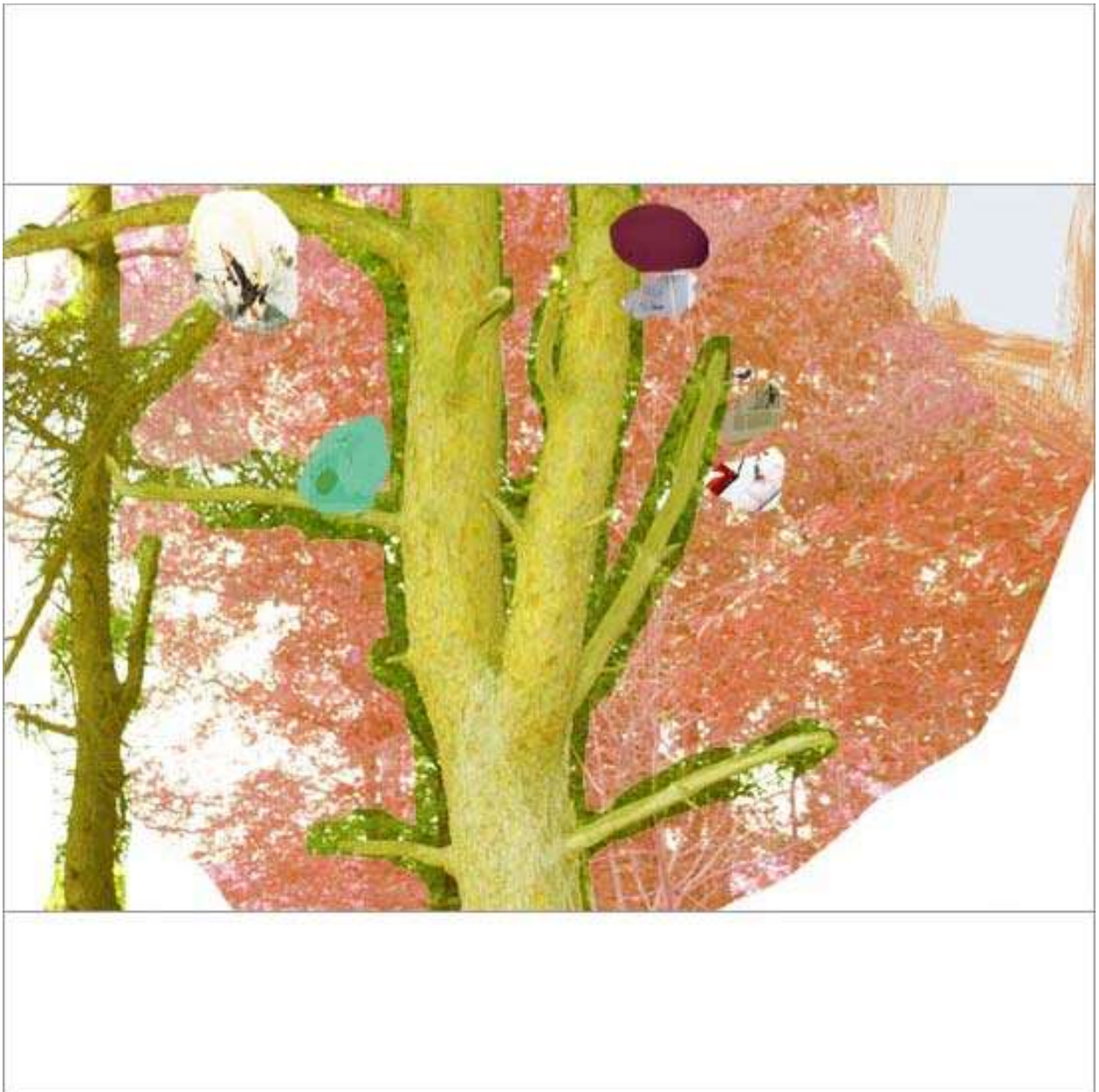
Did I blossom?

And if I did, will I be able to do it again?

Link to more works from this series:

<http://www.janskovgard.dk/wordpress/?cat=9>

Stella



Stella (no. 11), 2009
Digital C-print (lambda)

Comment: See description Stella on the next page

**Stella****Stella**

As a child I learned to draw stars.

Many children do. And it is a practical thing in case you have to decorate a night sky...

The pattern is simple. It is made in one unbroken line and it is done rather quickly. From left horizontally to the right, from here in an upwards diagonal direction, down, up and back down to your starting point. The result is a five-sided star.

My project took the name from this star.

The foundation is five empty building sites, – lots that I acquired in 2005 (under the influence of anti-depressants). All the sites were bought from different owners whom I visited, and they have all been empty since their parcellation in the beginning of the '70s. For more than 30 years. They are quite big, between 2255 and 3903 square meters. One is during winter time a swamp, two of them have become little woods with huge trees, and two appears savannah-like with tall grass, thickets and shrubs.

They are beautiful.

But they also contain an intrinsic dream that no longer is. Not necessarily the same dream but a dream that broke. Whether they were originally acquired on speculative purpose, whether as a wish for building a summer cottage, the dream did not come true.

If you look at them on a map or an aerial photography and connect the lots with the star of your childhood, you will – with a little good intention – discover a five-sided star.

It is leaning a bit, – some, actually. But it is beautiful.

And in it I have now parked some of my dreams.

Stella I and II

Stella I and II are parts of the Stella project.

Regarding the motifs the photo series refer – as is the case of much of what I have made so far – to my earlier works.

Fragments of earlier works brought together in a new context.

I choose what I want to show, – even in details, and what is to be shown together and in which connection this is to be exhibited.

I am in control...

The difference between the two parts of the series, Stella I and Stella II is, as I see it, not significant.

Stella I represents the first and original thought that came to my mind: I would like to see my works displayed in trees. I would also like to see my works displayed on the small slopes produced by the sea as it eats the marsh.

(This is where the Stella project is brought into the picture, for the locality is my building sites and the beach in Northern Jutland).

In Stella II the original idea has developed into involving also other scenarios around the lots as well as activities linked to the building sites.

Link to more works from the Stella I series:

<http://www.janskovgard.dk/test25.php>

Link to more works from the Stella II series:

<http://www.janskovgard.dk/test26.php>

RE-stone



RE-stone (no. 5), 2009
Digital C-print (lambda)

Comment: See description RE-stone on the next page



RE-stone

RE-stone

The cryptic title refers partly to the STONE series from 1996, partly to the fact that much of my production refers to earlier production.

RE-stone is about repeating.

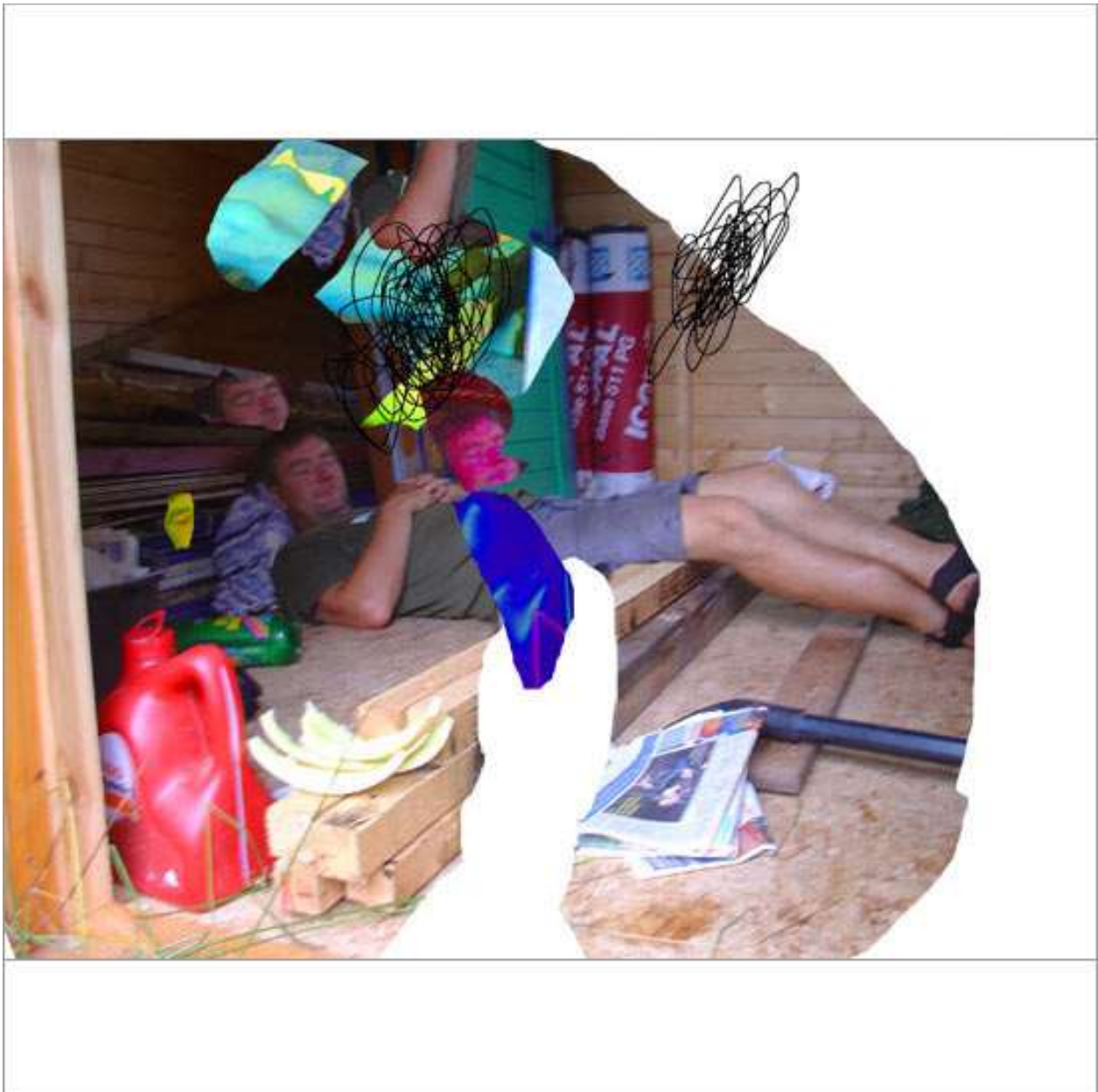
Repeating in the sense: Would you please repeat?

I “listen” to an argument having been put forward at an earlier occasion and in case I find that it is still valid and communicates with me (time is, as you may know, efficient at sorting out) I try to re-formulate. This “re-formulating” is RE-.

Link to more works from this series:

<http://www.janskovgard.dk/wordpress/?cat=6>

RE-thinking



RE-thinking (no. 3), 2009

Digital C-print (lambda)

Comment: See description RE-thinking on the next page



RE-thinking

The series is a parenthesis, an intermezzo with lines going back to a.o. the STONE-series (The Couch Potato Panel¹⁾).

The series is different from what I usually do in that respect that I am the motif, and that the “scenario” has been caught by someone else.

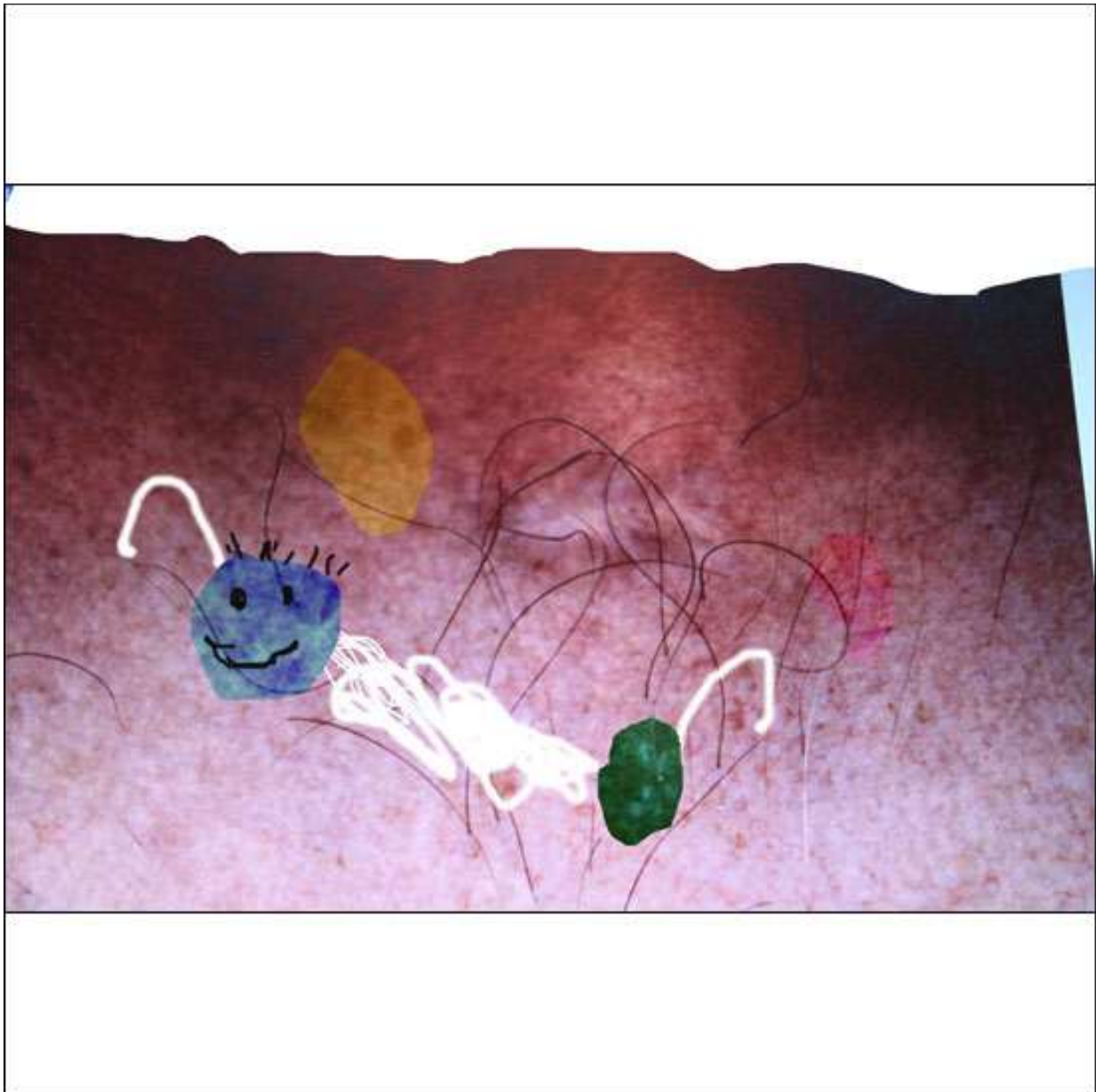
I have not been part of the motif since a photo²⁾ of a situation in which I was playing ball was taken in 1989.

Link to more works from this series:

<http://www.janskovgard.dk/wordpress/?cat=5>

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1. Reproduction in the book UPDATE, p. 34
 2. Reproduction in the book Red Herring, p. 31

RE-vival



RE-vival (no. 9) – Hullet i halsen, 2009

Digital C-print (lambda)

Comment: See description RE-vival on the next page



RE-vival

March 17, 2004.

That day is the eye of before and after.

Before, - too many years of vegetating.

Before, - described in only one word: Cornered.

After, - everything starting anew.

Learning to breathe, eat, talk, sit, stand and walk on my own feet.

Time is a factor – a Self is to be re-born.

Many people have got "tattoos" here and there. I've got many.

Many people have got scars here and there. I've got many.

November 2009

Jan Skovgård

The hole in my throat (the machine and I)

I wake up – not just all of a sudden, rather very slowly. Slowly, over days.

And slowly I become aware that I cannot speak and that a machine is breathing for me.

(I was kept unconscious for 10 days).

Consuming takes place through a tube in my nose. In general, tubes are everywhere. Tubes for anything. Anything going in and out. Tubes everywhere and through all holes. A new hole has been cut in my throat. Through this hole runs the tube from the respirator – the machine that regulates and controls my respiration.

I cannot say anything. Not a single sound. The hole and the position of the tube prevent me from speaking. I am able to nod and shake my head.

As my Self begins to awaken and my need to express myself grows, I am being supplied with paper and pencil. I write and write, again and again, but to my frustration it is impossible to read what I am writing.

Later I have seen what I wrote. It is not legible. Waves of continuous lines, not letters, rather doodles.

But this is not the impression that I have. In my opinion I am writing. (It appears to me, that I am writing?)

Returning to the hole in my throat.

Does a hole in the throat connected to one's windpipe – and through which some machine controls one's respiration – cause fear?

It does not.

Not until the machine is about to be disconnected and removed.

This takes place as a result of a process – in several steps.

At first, the machine is being "slowed down". You must yourself work harder to adjust to new circumstances.

It makes you sweat. It is hard to learn to breathe.

And finally:

The machine is turned off.

One's body is alert, sweat running, pulse galloping.

It is hard but you can do it, your breathing settles.

Your body calms down.

It is a great relief.

I can breathe, I can speak.

The hole in my windpipe is wide open and the false respiration running in and out of the hole is audible. It hisses.

The hole heals by itself, – surprisingly quickly.

Only the scar is left visible.

Link to more works from this series:

<http://www.janskovgard.dk/wordpress/?cat=3>