

This Dusk Song

solo exhibition by Gwenneth Boelens
curated by Eloise Sweetman

Treignac Projet
Treignac, France

16 October 2020 - 4 January 2021

This Dusk Song is sunset and mist.
This Dusk Song is auditory and lived.
This Dusk Song is river rushing and hiss.

Located in an old yarn factory in the French countryside, *This Dusk Song* is an exhibition of architectural, material and elemental intimacy found in the work of Dutch artist Gwenneth Boelens.

The location and the industrial history complements and elevates Boelens investigation into forgotten weaving techniques and the use of striking fibres such as electro-conductive and reflective threads in her works. In particular, with an intricate site-specific installation, Boelens attunes to Treignac Projet's



multiple exhibition sites by threading copper and steel fibres over rollers, spindles, and pulleys reclaimed from textile machinery from the factory's heyday. The installation stretches across beams, runs down the wall, and journeys across the floor.

Boelens's new installation is set in dialogue with *The very thing we don't know is always trying to expand* (2016), a two-channel film work based on interviews with Erik Verlinde, theoretical physicist, about his yet-to-be released theory. Boelens has been intrigued by Verlinde's process of finding new ways to think about ever-challenging topics like gravity, and the 95 per cent of undefined 'matter' in the universe, and how these topics resist visibility.

Installed throughout Treignac Projet are *Shields, Shells, Shh*, made on-site, specifically for this exhibition, using recycled sheets of steel as well as acrylic, paper, and offset printing plates. Appearing as satellites fallen to the ground, the work transforms into a shield and a shell. Left to the elements, the light-sensitive pieces will slowly become markers of time as they are bleached by the autumn sun.

Both locations are filled by atmospheric audio works, the first created by strumming the loom from which Gwenneth has woven her textiles and the second by a theremin fed into a modular synthesizer. The exhibition soundtrack to *This Dusk Song* is accompanied by the sound of the rushing river that runs below the exhibition.

This Dusk Song is made possible by Stichting Stokroos Foundation, Stichting Niemeijer Foundation and Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Paris.













































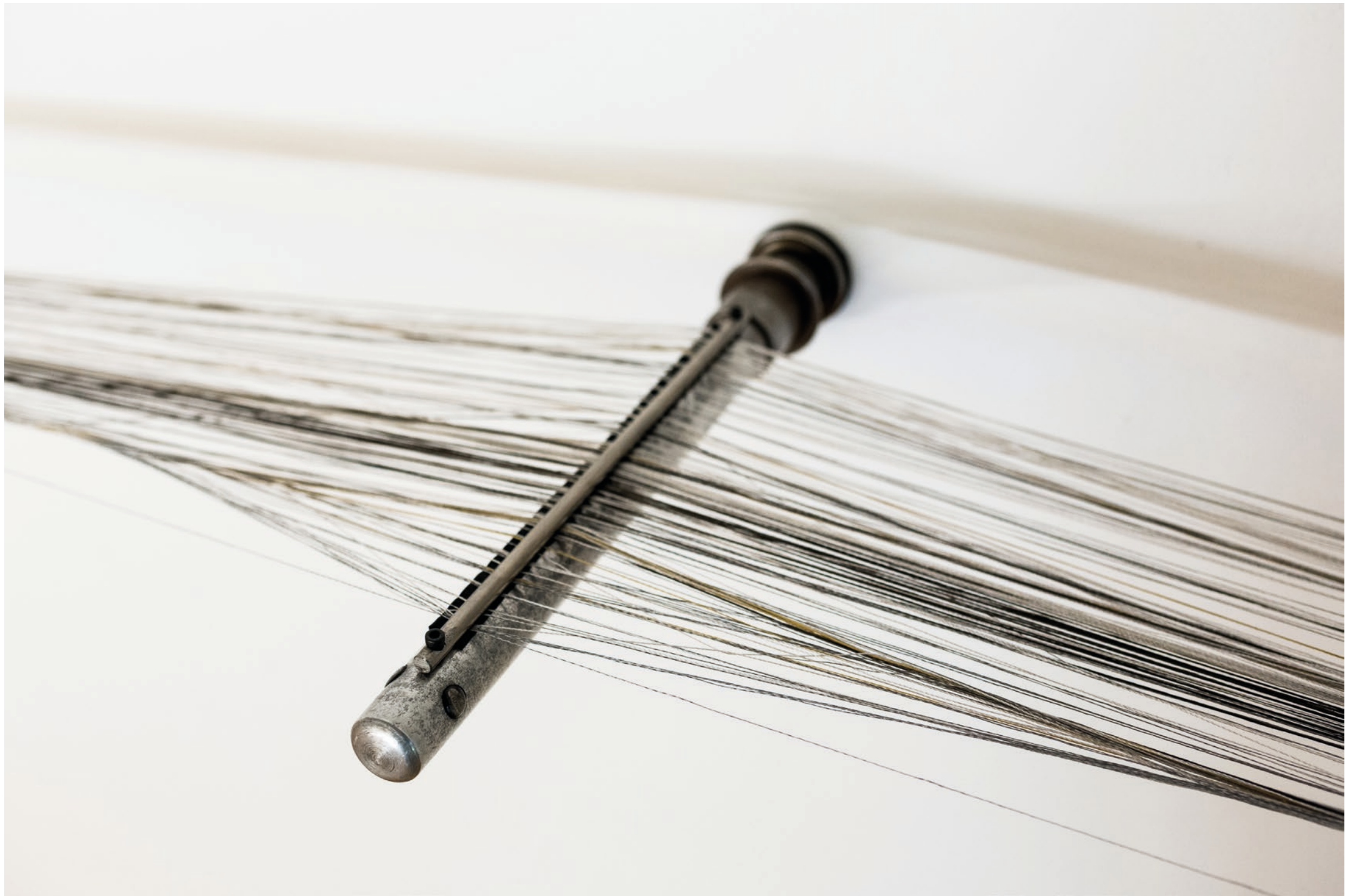














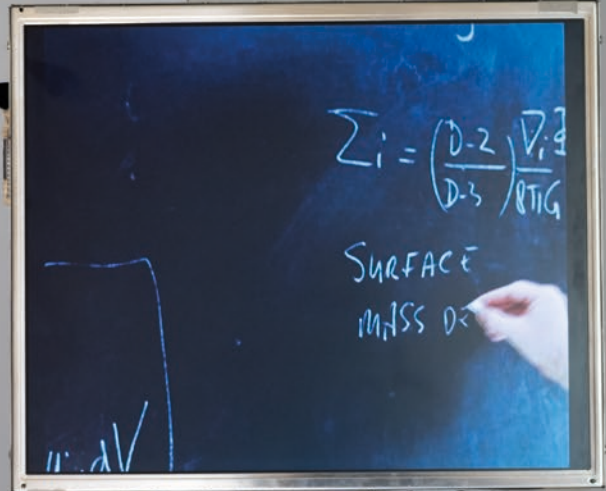


But because I do have some dim conception at the outset,

[filmstill]



[filmstill]



$$\Sigma_i = \left(\frac{D-2}{D-3} \right) \frac{V_i \cdot \mathbf{E}}{RTIG}$$

SURFACE

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*This is not a song, it's a spell
and it's haunted me for years.*

*Essay for Gwenneth Boelens written by Eloise
Sweetman*

*on the occasion of This Dusk Song
at Treignac Projet, 17 October - 22 November 2020*

Vermillion red, gold, deep purple
Cobalt blue, silver-white, concrete grey
Pale yellow, white, blue, marigold yellow.

Sit silently. Take a moment to let everything pour over you. Can you hear the river rushing, and the wind blowing in the trees? Maybe there is rain today and you can hear bodies moving somewhere nearby. A kettle whistles. Now, can you hear the strum of tight strings of a weaving loom? The sound moves through space perhaps carried through the threads that stretch across, and through, the architecture of the room. The flow of the artwork made of electro-conductive and reflective fibres, of copper, of basalt, of steel. At times the tautness slackens, and the threads hang loosely on each other. Then they fan out catching the light at different times of the day. Vibrations course through the installation. Everything is moving even when we pause to contemplate where we are. Open to the elements on a day in a season that always feels at dusk.

This Dusk Song is sunset and mist.

The exhibition is cycling through time, across two buildings with two histories. In this current sequence, we are making up the history of the third. In a past life, the buildings were a hospice and an orphanage, later a textile factory and now an alcove for the arts. On the facade of the building stands St. Anne, the patron saint of mothers, unmarried women, housewives, women in labour, who wish to conceive, grandmothers, educators, lace makers, seamstresses, and miners of precious metals.

Using different metals in her installation *This Dusk Song (subtle body)*, Gwenneth Boelens attunes to Treignac Projet's multiple exhibition sites by threading copper, steel, reflective, conductive, and aramide fibers over rollers and spindles reclaimed from textile machinery from the factory's heyday. Gwenneth uses the machine parts as the supporting structure of the installation while at the same time weaving the two locations together. Although they are brought together, the totality of the work can not be comprehended at one time. Only through thinking back at the exhibition can you complete the work. *This Dusk Song (subtle body)* is contemplative. Inviting the audience to pause and join in its deliberation.

This Dusk Song is river rushing and hiss.

Scattered throughout Treignac Projet are Shields, Shells, Shhh, made on-site using one cut from recycled sheets of steel from the factory as well as newspaper and offset printing plates. Appearing as satellites fallen to the ground, the work transforms into a shield and a shell. Left to the elements, the light-sensitive pieces will slowly become markers of time as they are bleached by the autumn sun. And in many ways, Gwenneth's works mark time and process on their surface. Shadows, tan lines. Subtle bodies floating on the surface. Like foam collecting on the top of a river.

In her two-channel video work *The very thing we don't know is always trying to expand* (2016), draws upon interviews with Erik Verlinde, theoretical physicist, who has spent his entire working life developing a theory of matter. Together he and Gwenneth document for the first time his theory for the world to see. In the small monitor, he writes out his formula as the camera pans across the length of the wall. We hear him in the larger screen answering Gwenneth's questions on subjects gravity, and the 95 per cent of undefined 'matter' in the universe, and how these topics resist visibility. At the end of the video, he describes what is known, and assumed, like the crests of a wave at dusk.

This Dusk Song is auditory and lived.

This Dusk Song is a phrasing written by Val Plumwood in the chapter *Place-based spirituality as oppositional practice* from her book "Environmental Culture: the ecological crisis of reason" (1990). It is in that paragraph that Plumwood talks about the importance of staying in one place. To call a place home, to belong somewhere. Thus through that belonging, you can get to know a place in ways that a short visit can not adequately allow. Val recalls the various bird song that she hears from her window telling her the times of day and changes in season. Time is marked by diapason and light. Now in times of Covid-19, it feels ever more profound to be in one place. By staying in one place you can move and be moved through the world in different ways, carried on an autumn breeze, harried by a hornet. Plumwood writes "The communicativity and intentionality of more-than-human others is often the key to the power of place." And yet, she discounts the human world of "silent objects" that impoverish the experience of life. But we know that artworks are not silent. They are in their own right centres of communicativity and intentionality creating power with a place in the middle of the countryside.

Silver, reddish copper, pearlescent yellow,
muted toad green.

Blue, silver, reddish-orange, green.

White, grey, orange, green, black, greyish blue

Yellow, grey, rusty white, green.

Art work list (white space)

This Dusk Song (subtle body) (2020), copper, stainless steel thread, reclaimed factory spools and rollers, magnets, speaker, 54 m

Shield, Shell, Shhh (2020), offset printing plate, glass fibre, epoxy, dimensions variable

Shield, Shell, Shhh (2020), Dutch newspapers from 13 March - 6 April 2020, dimensions variable

Art work list (yellow space)

Shield, Shell, Shhh (2020), glass fibre, epoxy, dimensions variable

Shield, Shell, Shhh (2020), offset printing plate. glass fibre, epoxy, dimensions variable

The very thing we don't know is always trying to expand (2016), digitized 16mm films,
Large projection 11 minutes
Small monitor 14 minutes

This Dusk Song (subtle body) (2020), reflective, conductive, aramide thread, 25 m