

**Susan Morris**

**Four Tapestries**

20.03. - 26.04.2025

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Bartha\_contemporary presents *Four Tapestries*, a display of recent work by British artist Susan Morris. The show includes three new works from the *Binary Tapestry: Sunshine* series, each of which record the amount of daylight the artist was exposed to over the course of a single year (2010, 2011 and 2012). These will be shown alongside a fourth work that records her sleep/wake patterns, alongside concurrent light exposure, over a period of the same three years.

The tapestries were woven directly out of data recorded on an Actiwatch, a scientific-medical device used to track disturbances in sleep that Morris has used in her work since 2005. Worn on the wrist, the Actiwatch preceded the now ubiquitous self-tracking devices, such as Fitbits and Apple watches, and initially could only record three weeks' worth of data at a time. Despite this limitation, Morris persisted, eventually making continuous recordings of up to five years to produce a large body of work collectively titled *SunDial:Night Watch*.

All of Morris's tapestries are woven on a Jacquard loom, which operates – like the computer of which it was the precursor – on a binary system. Thus, the recorded data is translated directly into coloured thread and into a textile that maps lived experience across clock and calendrical time. The resulting tapestries function as material records of the body in time, where the logic of measurement meets the organic fluctuations of daily life.

Yet the works do have a relation to representation and conjure up images of things in the world. For example, the art historian Margaret Iversen has described the patterns in the Sunshine tapestries as 'reminiscent of the reflection of a sunset on water'<sup>1</sup>. Stretched like paintings, the works also pay homage to the work of Alighiero Boetti, particularly his *L'albero delle ore (The Hour Tree)*, of 1979.

Using bright yellow cotton interwoven with undyed linen thread, the cascade of rippling horizontal lines, expanding in the middle for the summer and tapering during the winter months, show daily variations in the duration and intensity of ambient light. Two of the three tapestries also record a shift in time zone, evidence of a transatlantic trip taken by the artist on those particular years.

The fourth tapestry, *SunDial:NightWatch\_Activity and Light 2010-2012 (Satin Weave)*, 2017, is, likewise, an extremely accurate record of three years of the artist's sleep/wake patterns, with each minute of each of the 1,096 recorded days represented by a single weft thread. Continuing Morris's long-standing engagement with the way digital recordings of bodily rhythms can be translated into a kind of displaced self-portrait – or cast shadow of the 'self', *Four Tapestries* invites viewers to consider the intersection of technological systems and human experience; of materiality and time, and of other, more unruly, rhythms at play that leave their own, singular trace.

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<https://contemporary.burlington.org.uk/journal/journal/camera-consciousness-on-susan-morris-concordances-and-silence-on-prepared-loom>