

# Laurence Aëgerter

## *Ici mieux qu'en face* ("Better here than there")

PRESS RELEASE  
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Petit Palais  
Musée des Beaux-Arts  
de la Ville de Paris

Tuesday to Sunday, 10am to 6pm.  
Free admission

INFORMATIONS  
[www.petitpalais.paris.fr](http://www.petitpalais.paris.fr)

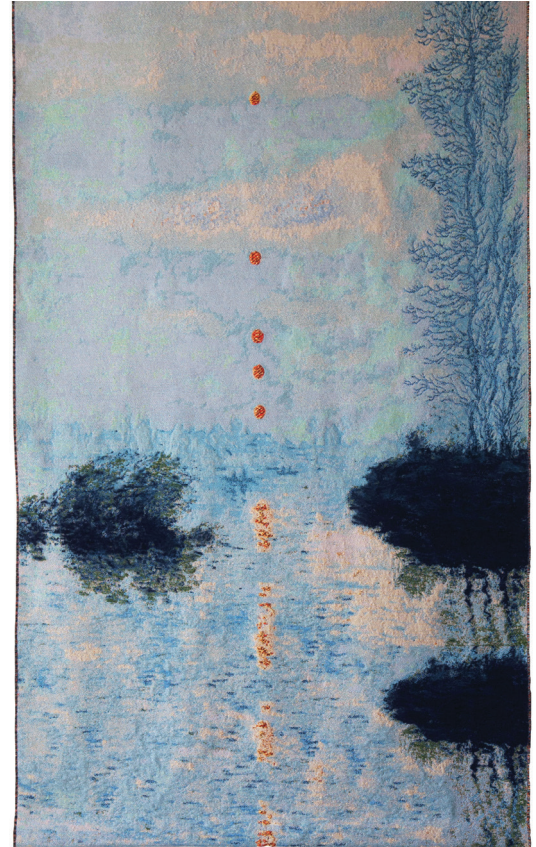
**This autumn, the Petit Palais invites Laurence Aëgerter for her first monographic exhibition in Paris. The exhibition reflects the artist's insatiable curiosity for a place she has frequented for more than two years, and which she views through the sensitive and poetic lens of her eye. With some 50 works scattered throughout the museum, including the garden, Aëgerter initiates an unsettling and stimulating dialogue with the collections. Touched by their grace but also their fragility, she attempts to take care of these objects and offer them a new life.**

Laurence Aëgerter is a multi-disciplinary artist who enjoys using different media to feed her imagination: photography, tapestry, ceramics or in-situ installations. The works are all fuelled by a desire for escape. Aëgerter is a storyteller on the cusp between illusion and reality. Inspired by the principle of mirrors and *trompe-l'œil*, she takes pleasure in showing the flip side of reality and opening up other fields of possibility to represent the world. She invites visitors to the Petit Palais to embark with her on a surprising journey through several centuries of art history, offering a fresh take on the notions of museum.

The exhibition opens with a mirror engraved with the words *Ici mieux qu'en face* ("Better here than there"), a metaphor for duality and escape, themes dear to the artist. This desire for an escape is also evoked in the work "Confetti", made up of 58,038 photographs in the artist's telephone. Each image is reduced to the size of a speck of confetti, reactivating the memories they evoke and setting them free. Her exploration of duality is particularly poignant in the Impressionist room, where Aëgerter initiates a dialogue with one of the museum's masterpieces: *Sunset on the Seine at Lavacourt* by Claude Monet. Her tapestry borrows the same motif as the painting, only here, the sun appears five times, like a ricochet that replicates a theme dear to the Impressionist master. The permanence of memory, the passage of time and precariousness of human lives recur throughout Aëgerter's work. In the large-format gallery, she shrouds several sculptures with a delicate *Schutzmäntel* (cloak of protection), a reference to the mantle worn by the Virgin Mary to shelter the humble and weak. Further, she reinterprets Petit Palais' paintings to go on with her serie "Compositions Catalytiques". This work was initiated with young adults suffering of mental disorders and living in a psychiatric hospital in Utrecht, Netherlands.

Aëgerter's poetry is fully expressed in the Tuck gallery of the Petit Palais, where an 18th-century harp was fitted with new strings that drip glass tears. The tears contain miniscule numbers and letters that, when combined, evoke the names and telephone numbers of people who were loved or lost. Thus are Aëgerter's sensitive works scattered throughout the two floors of the Petit Palais collections.

During this unexpected trip in the Petit Palais, photographs, sculptures and tapestries of Laurence Aëgerter give us the proof that it is possible to play with the ghosts of our past to offer them a new destiny.



Laurence Aëgerter, *Sunsets on the Seine at Lavacourt*, 2020. Jacquard tapestry in mixed fibres, including mohair and lurex, 260 x 165cm © Laurence Aëgerter



Laurence Aëgerter, photo credit: Naomi Jansen

### ***About Laurence Aëgerter***

Laurence Aëgerter's oeuvre consists of installations, photography, artists books, and projects designed to serve vulnerable populations in the grips of mental illness. Her works are imbued with a taste developed from childhood for paintings and antiques, encyclopaedias and practical manuals, museum catalogues and images. In 1993, Aëgerter left France for the Netherlands, where she has lived and worked ever since. Fascinated both by masterpieces and the small, ordinary objects of everyday life, she stands in relentless wonder of the beauty of things and their infinite perceptions. These past years, Laurence Aëgerter has been the subject of several solo exhibitions: at Rencontres Arles, MAMAC in Nice, and the Hermitage Museum in Amsterdam. She will be in residency at the Manufacture de Sèvres in 2021.

**The exhibition was made possible by the Mondriaan Fund.**



**The exhibition benefits from the support of the Dutch Embassy in France.**



### **CURATORS :**

Fannie Escoulen (guest curator), Christophe Leribault, Clara Roca (Petit Palais curators)

### **PRESS CONTACT :**

Mathilde Beaujard : [mathilde.beaujard@paris.fr](mailto:mathilde.beaujard@paris.fr) / + 33 (0)1 53 43 40 14

