

Soft Companions

Sensory-Interactive Textile Creatures for Reciprocal Care

Hosted by: Katrijn Westland

Project Information (EN)

The Ecology

Soft Companions is an ecology of dynamic, creature-like textile artefacts that explores how lifelike textile companions can evoke reciprocal care through sensory interactions with non-human matter.

Motivated by the growing epidemic of loneliness and the underexplored role of sensory engagement in our caring habits, the project shifts attention from utilitarian human-object interaction towards reciprocal sensory interaction.

Rather than functioning as passive objects, the companions invite acts of grooming, soothing, observation, and care.

Using naturally dyed knitted textiles combined with e-textiles, sensors, pneumatic systems, and soft mechanics, the companions breathe, move, emit warmth and light, purr when content, encourage calm breathing, and wander towards sunlight.

Through these interactions, they create moments of mutual regulation between human and textile companion.

The resulting ecology positions textiles as active companions rather than passive matter, proposing care as a relational, sensory, and ecological exchange between human and non-human bodies.

Projectinformatie (NL)

De Ecologie

Soft Companions is an ecology of dynamic, creature-like textile artefacts that explores how lifelike textile companions can evoke reciprocal care through sensory interactions with non-human matter.

Motivated by the growing epidemic of loneliness and the underexplored role of sensory engagement in our caring habits, the project shifts attention from utilitarian human-object interaction towards reciprocal sensory interaction.

Rather than functioning as passive objects, the companions invite acts of grooming, soothing, observation, and care.

Using naturally dyed knitted textiles combined with e-textiles, sensors, pneumatic systems, and soft mechanics, the companions breathe, move, emit warmth and light, purr when content, encourage calm breathing, and wander towards sunlight.

Through these interactions, they create moments of mutual regulation between human and textile companion.

The resulting ecology positions textiles as active companions rather than passive matter, proposing care as a relational, sensory, and ecological exchange between human and non-human bodies.

Image List

Filename	Caption	Credit
11_1786493965.jpg	Film still, Soft Companion: Fondling	Videographer: Celine Caly
2_1786493978.jpg	Film still, Soft Companion: Morphling	Videographer: Celine Caly
3_1786493993.jpg	Soft Companion: Driftling.	Kasper Heden
4_1786494005.jpg	Soft Companions Sample	Katrijn Westland
untitled-2_1786494017.jpg	Soft Companion Sample	Katrijn Westland

The images above are included in the ZIP under /images.