

Brookfield Properties

PRESS RELEASE

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Intoart's Christian Ovonlen presents his first solo exhibition with Brookfield Properties, in partnership with Crafts Council

In recognition of his contribution to contemporary craft, winner of this year's Brookfield Properties Craft Award, Christian Ovonlen, represented by London-based art and design collective Intoart, will stage his first-ever solo exhibition across two of Brookfield Properties' spaces

Exhibition curated in partnership with the Crafts Council



Left: Christian Ovonlen at the Intoart studio. Right: Ella Ritchie MBE, Director, Intoart and Christian Ovonlen. Credit: Alun Callender Photo

London, 24 May, 2022 – Intoart's Christian Ovonlen will stage his first-ever solo exhibition with Brookfield Properties, one of London's largest commercial developers and landlords. Curated in partnership with the Crafts Council, the exhibition presents two separate bodies of work across two of Brookfield Properties' exhibition spaces – 'Theatrical' at 99 Bishopsgate and 'Botanical' at Aldgate Tower and will be open to the public from 20 June to 25 September.

In recognition of his contribution to contemporary craft, Ovonlen's work has also been acquired this year into two internationally significant collections of contemporary craft – the Crafts Council and world-renowned art, design and performance museum, the V&A.

The exhibition and acquisition of Ovonlen's work for the Crafts Council Collection are all part of the artist's accolade at this year's winner of the Brookfield Properties Craft Award, – a leading craft prize for U.K.-based artists worth £60,000¹, now in its third year and created in partnership with the Crafts Council.

Selected from over 400 makers and a shortlist of five international artists, Ovonlen was presented with the prize for his 'Ballets Russes' series of theatrical, hand painted and printed silks as part of his presentation at Collect – the annual leading fair for contemporary craft and design produced by the Crafts Council, and where the V&A also acquired two pieces of his work for its permanent collection.

¹ The Brookfield Properties Craft Award is one of the leading in the wider creative sector, with a prize package to the value of £60,000, which includes the purchase of a piece or a selection of works which benefits both artist and representing gallery, a solo exhibition of the selected artist at two Brookfield Properties sites in the heart of the City and also support for the Award partner, the Crafts Council.

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As part of the award, both the artist and Intoart have received curatorial and production support from Brookfield Properties and the Crafts Council to produce this exhibition. The collection of nine pieces acquired by Brookfield Properties as a gift to the Crafts Council Collection, including works from his 'Ballets Russes' and 'Botanical Silk' series, will be central to the exhibition featuring a collection of some 25 works presented across the two spaces.

'Theatrical' at 99 Bishopsgate will feature nine works including five pieces from the artist's 'Ballets Russes' series, the winning body of work, which the artist took inspiration from Ballets Russes and theatre productions from the 19th and 20th century, incorporating costume, scenography and dramatic lighting, originating in his research into costume and performance stages from the V&A and internationally held archives.

While 'Botanical' at Aldgate Tower will focus on the artist's screen print works featuring his 'Botanical Silk' series with a body of 16 works bringing lush foliage and vibrant florals into the city.



Left: Ballets Russes: Circus Costume on Stage (2021), hand painted and printed silk (presented at 99 Bishopsgate); Right: Botanical Silk (Soft Turquoise) (2018), screen-print on silk (presented at Aldgate Tower); courtesy of the artist and Intoart

Ovonlen joined Intoart, a London-based collective of 24 artists and designers with learning disabilities in 2013, where he developed a practice inspired by his interest in pop visual culture and the history of fashion and costume. His practice begins in drawing – known for his use of bold colours and lavish textures, which the artist then translates works on paper into the medium of textile design and handcrafted print techniques to create handmade, printed silk textiles that hang vertically to reference the stages and performers that inspired them.

Intoart was co-founded in 2000 by Ella Ritchie MBE and Sam Jones with a vision for people with learning disabilities to be visible, equal, and established artists through its studio located in Peckham, London. Intoart's artistic programme creates opportunities for production, leadership, and audience engagement. Since its establishment, 'The Intoart Collection' has grown to include over 3,000 original artworks by artists from the collective spanning ceramics, textiles, drawing, painting and print with a number of significant works having been acquired by National Art collections and internationally renowned museums.

Through its extensive cultural programme, Brookfield Properties brings its indoor and outdoor spaces to life through culture with the aim of connecting people and creating memorable experiences. These experiences allow for reflection on contemporary life in urban environments including its properties at 99 Bishopsgate and Aldgate Tower.

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Quotes

Christian Ovonlen – Artist and Winner of the Brookfield Properties Craft Award 2022, said: “I feel happy, it's beautiful and amazing. To have exhibitions of my work makes me proud. I close my eyes and imagine being at the theatre, in the audience scared of the dark and then happy when the stage lights shine. The dancers are dancing on the stage, I am hearing classical music. The dancers in my silks are like a melody. I am excited to make more textiles, painting the inks and the performers on the stage.”

Ella Ritchie MBE – Director, Intoart, said: “It's a significant and timely moment for Christian having worked for nine years in the Intoart studio. It's been thrilling to witness the fruition of this significant body of work in silks, taking drawing into textiles to develop a truly unique visual language. The recognition that comes with this award, alongside internationally renowned artist-makers, and now presenting his first ever solo exhibition is testament to Christian's contribution to craft. We are excited that now this work will be seen on a scale that will delight new audiences.”

Rosy Greenlees – OBE and Executive Director of the Crafts Council, said: *“At the Crafts Council we are passionate about how craft can enrich our lives and so we are delighted to be partnering with Brookfield Properties again on what is one of the most significant craft prizes in the country. Not only does this award and exhibition provide such an important opportunity for Christian Ovonlen and Intoart but by being acquired for the Crafts Council Collection it ensures the work can be seen and enjoyed by the public for many years to come.”*

Caitlin Warfield – Vice President, Brookfield Properties, said: “A belief in the importance of arts and culture is in the DNA of Brookfield Properties. Artists and makers are vital in enriching our communities and imagining a new future as we emerge from the pandemic. That's why we're proud to be partnering with the Crafts Council on the Brookfield Properties' Craft Award – directly supporting artists and galleries, as well as providing a significant contribution to an important part of the U.K.'s national heritage, the Crafts Council public collection, and now delighted to present Christian's first solo show within our spaces.”

Saff Williams – Curatorial Director, Brookfield Properties, said: “We are so proud to present Christian Ovonlen's first solo show following being awarded the 2022 Award. Stepping into the Intoart studio in Peckham, I was immediately blown away by the colours and movement in Christian's work. His figures appear to lift off the silks, dancing across the fabric, bold in line and brushwork. His latest series, inspired by the Ballets Russes and his research around costuming and theatre, are translated across hand painted screen prints in vivid silks, inspiring imagination and joy. His works will be the perfect injection of life for visitors to view in our spaces.”

-ENDS-

Contact

For all press enquiries and interview opportunities, please contact Button Collective

Louise Oram | louise.oram@buttoncollective.com | 07888 747754

Annie Croll | annie.croll@buttoncollective.com | 07984 413362

Hebe Field | hebe.field@buttoncollective.com | 07527 369155

Press materials

All images and press assets are available to download at [HERE](#).

Exhibition Details

Exhibition period: 20 June to 25 September

Press preview to be held on 22 June; further details to follow

Open daily, 24hs on weekdays and 7am – 7pm on weekends

Across 99 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 3XF and Aldgate Tower, 2 Leman Street. London. E1 8FA

Free admission

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About Brookfield Properties' Craft Award

The Brookfield Properties' Craft Award is one of the most significant craft prizes in the U.K. created in partnership with the Crafts Council. The Award recognises an artist who significantly contributes to the story of contemporary craft and making in the U.K.

As part of the award, Brookfield Properties acquires the winning artist's work for the Crafts Council Collection, which currently holds over 1,700 objects. The winning artist, selected by Crafts Council and Brookfield Properties curators, also receives a solo exhibition at a Brookfield Properties space opening in summer 2022. The inaugural award in 2020 was won by Matt Smith, with Anna Ray winning in 2021, and Christian Ovonlen is the third winner of the award.

About Brookfield Properties

Brookfield Properties is a leading global developer and operator of high-quality real estate assets. We are active in nearly all real estate sectors, including office, retail, multifamily, hospitality and logistics, operating more than 800 properties and nearly 375 million square feet of real estate in gateway cities around the globe on behalf of Brookfield Asset Management, one of the largest asset managers in the world. With a focus on sustainability, a commitment to excellence, and the drive for relentless innovation in the planning, development and management of buildings and their surroundings, Brookfield Properties is reimagining real estate from the ground up.

www.brookfieldproperties.com

Instagram: [@BrookfieldProperties](https://www.instagram.com/BrookfieldProperties) and [@ArtsBrookfield](https://www.instagram.com/ArtsBrookfield)

About Intoart

Intoart is an art and design studio based in London (U.K.). The collective of artists and designers with learning disabilities work from their studio in Peckham, South London. Intoart addresses inequalities of access to and participation in the visual arts, education and culture by people with learning disabilities. Established in 2000 and led by co-founders Ella Ritchie MBE and Sam Jones, the studio, now in its 22nd year, is a site of collective action, leadership and ambitious art, design and craft production. www.intoart.org.uk

Instagram: [@intoart_uk](https://www.instagram.com/intoart_uk)

About Christian Ovonlen

Christian Ovonlen won the Brookfield Properties Craft Award for his Ballets Russes series which takes inspiration from theatre productions from the 19th and 20th Century, incorporating costume, scenography and dramatic lighting to create intricate and vivid marks hand painted on luxuriously hand dyed silks. Employing drawn and gestural mark making and distinctive use of colour, these complex and rich compositions result in unique works that hang vertically to reference the stages and performers from which they take their inspiration.

Ovonlen's work has been exhibited in a number of group exhibitions including 'Fashioning Space' at the V&A as part of London Design Festival and 'Peckham Craft Show' for London Craft Week.

He is a member of the London based collective, Intoart.

About Crafts Council

The Crafts Council is the national charity for craft. We believe craft skills and knowledge enrich and uplift us as individuals and can change our world for the better. Through our activities we inspire making, empower learning and nurture craft businesses. We do this by championing craft and its positive impact on society, increasing levels of craft education and participation, growing the market for craft, and by building a sustainable and inclusive craft sector.

www.craftscouncil.org.uk

Instagram: [@CraftsCouncil](https://www.instagram.com/CraftsCouncil)

Brookfield Properties

About 99 Bishopsgate

99 Bishopsgate provides 26 floors of high specification office accommodation totalling 340,000 square feet. With its dramatic glazed façades and commanding presence, 99 Bishopsgate is a landmark building at the centre of Europe's financial capital. The building was extensively reconstructed in 1995, with further refurbishment in 2006. In 2012, 143,000 square feet of vacant office space received a new CAT-A finish and in 2013, a stunning, new entrance façade and reception were completed.

About Aldgate Tower

Aldgate Tower is Whitechapel's most recognisable tower comprising of 16 levels of Grade A office space and a newly redeveloped reception. The building is located on the corner of Whitechapel High Street and Commercial Street, well placed between the traditional City core and East London Tech City.
