

Press Release

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Pioneering textile artist Alice Kettle presents new solo exhibition in London with Brookfield Properties, in partnership with Crafts Council

'To Boldly Sew: Textile Art by Alice Kettle' opens to the public from 5 July to 29 September, in recognition of Kettle's contribution to UK contemporary craft as the winner of this year's Brookfield Properties Craft Award – a unique partnership with the Crafts Council supporting artists, galleries and a national public collection



Left to right: Alice working on her Sunflower series ahead of her solo exhibition 'To Boldly Sew'; Schiffli Series, Ormo, 2006, Thread on canvas 249 x 200 cm; artist in her studio. Photo credit to Vicky Polak

LONDON, JUNE 2023 — Renowned British textile artist Alice Kettle is to stage an expansive exhibition as a collaborative project presented and curated by Brookfield Properties, a leading commercial developer, landlord and a 30-year patron of the arts, and the Crafts Council, the national charity for contemporary craft.

'To Boldly Sew: Textile Art by Alice Kettle' extends across two of Brookfield Properties' exhibition spaces in London's Square Mile at 99 Bishopsgate and 30 Fenchurch Street. Open to the public from 5 July to 29 September, the exhibition brings together a collection of Kettle's significant and new works, showcasing the breadth of her practice and technical mastery from her over 40-year career.

The exhibition follows Kettle's win of the fourth annual Brookfield Properties Craft Award, a leading contemporary craft prize for UK-based artists awarded at the Crafts Council's Collect Art Fair each year, in recognition of her

significant contribution to the national story of contemporary craft and making. As part of a prize package worth the equivalent of £60,000, the winning artist is the subject of a solo exhibition at Brookfield Properties' landmark venues in London and has artworks acquired for and accessioned into the Crafts Council Collection – a major public asset which holds over 1,700 objects acquired from the 1970s onwards.

This year, Saff Williams, Curatorial Director for Brookfield Properties and Annabelle Campbell, Crafts Council, selected Alice Kettle, represented by Candida Stevens Gallery, as the recipient of the 2023 Brookfield Properties Craft Award from over 400 makers, and a shortlist of five international artists. Through this prestigious craft award, her most recent work will become part of the Crafts Council Collection, which also holds a 1988 piece by the artist, with the acquisition of three pieces including *Three Girls*, 2022; *Little Bird*, 2022; and *The Swimmers*, 2023 which form part of the exhibition at 99 Bishopsgate.

Internationally renowned for being a pioneer in her art form, Kettle's work is deeply rooted in traditional textile practices and incorporates innovative and contemporary techniques, pushing the boundaries of the medium. She uses a uniquely hybrid embroidery technique that involves a sewing machine, free-stitching and digital embroidery, often working on the back of the fabric to use thicker and unconventional threads.

A recurrent motif is the use of the figure to present personal and universal themes, featuring real and fictional characters that are navigating a range of situations and events. Kettle's work explores notions of memory, identity, and community, and her pieces often feature intricate, figurative compositions that capture the essence of the human experience, drawing on political events from the personal to the wider, shared experience.

The curation for '*To Boldly Sew*' will run across two exhibition spaces. The works displayed at 99 Bishopsgate present a collection of Kettle's motifs – the three figures observing their surroundings, the vastness of the sea, and figurative portraits all questioning our relationships with our world and surroundings.

The presentation at 30 Fenchurch Street brings together three bodies of work, each developed in a series and through collaborative projects: *Schiffli Series* (2006) created with the 86 needle schiffli embroidery machine at Manchester School of Art for the exhibition *Mechanical Drawing – The Schiffli Project*, in which Alice challenged the uniformity of repeat by changing the colour and thickness of the threads; the monumental *Flight Lines* created for the 4th Hangzhou Triennial of Fiber Art, China, 2022; and, the recent *House That Jack Built* series with the artist's narrative continuing across both works.

Kettle's work is also held in numerous international public collections including the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester, the Museo Internazionale delle Arti Applicate Oggi in Turin, Italy, Southampton City Art Gallery, Hove Museum and Art Gallery and Hanshan Art Museum, Suzhou China among others. Alongside her artistic practice, Alice Kettle is a professor of Textile Arts at Manchester School of Art, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Quotes:

Alice Kettle, Winner of 2023 Brookfield Properties Craft Award, said: "Craft is so important, it is about the deep understanding of the material that captivates, provokes and conveys experience, and inherently connects and transforms lives. Working in craft is lifechanging and I am proud to champion all forms of making."

Saff Williams – Curatorial Director, Brookfield Properties, said: "It is special to celebrate Alice Kettle with the 2023 Brookfield Properties Craft Award, an artist whose career has spanned four decades, who has continuously pushed the boundaries of textile art with her thoughtful embroidered works which use medium of thread and action of tension, to embody notions of the human condition and connection to nature. This year we celebrate an artist committed to her practice and a never-changing narrative, and we are delighted to present such a powerful show for the public this summer."

Notes to Editors

Press Enquiries

Please reach out to Button Collective on behalf of Brookfield Properties and Crafts Council for all enquiries and interview requests:

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Press Assets

All assets including images available [HERE](#)

About Alice Kettle

Alice Kettle – represented in the UK by Candida Stevens Gallery – is a contemporary textile/fibre artist who has established a unique area of practice. Her huge figurative stitched works, exploit the textures and effects made possible through the harnessing of a mechanical process to intuitive, conceptual, and creative ends. She spends many months making a single stitched work using as her subject matter a mix of stories which collide autobiographical, contemporary events, folklore, and mythology. Made with free machine embroidery the needle is like a drawing tool, describing the challenges and ambitions of the human condition.

AliceKettle.co.uk

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

About Candida Stevens Gallery

Candida Stevens Gallery is a curation-focused gallery that was established in 2013. The gallery produces exhibitions that explore important themes through the responses of emerging and established artists working in Britain today.

The gallery works with artists who are skilled, determined, and have the aptitude to create successful and interesting work. The gallery is known for its sensitivity to the work shown, with an underlying strength and authority.

With a regular program of exhibitions in London and Chichester, curated by Candida Stevens, who has a background in history of art, business psychology, and art finance and collection management, the gallery has established a reputation for ambitious curatorial themes and attracting important contemporary British artists.

CandidaStevens.com

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

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 over 330 million square feet of real estate in gateway markets 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.

We believe in the unique ability of art and culture to transform spaces and bring people together. That's why for over three decades, we have continued to support in music, dance, theatre, film, and visual art by pushing boundaries to create unique works of art and cultural experiences presented for free in our public and surrounding spaces.

[BrookfieldProperties.com](https://brookfieldproperties.com)

Instagram: [@BrookfieldPropertiesLondon](https://www.instagram.com/BrookfieldPropertiesLondon) and [@artsbrookfield](https://www.instagram.com/artsbrookfield)

About the Crafts Council and The Collection

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.

The Crafts Council Collection was initiated in 1972 to document trends and innovation in the materials, processes, skills and technologies of contemporary craft and is now the UK's foremost collection of contemporary craft. With over 1,700 objects, the Collection presents a view of contemporary craft in its widest sense, from its interface with cutting-edge design to its crossover with visual art. Objects in the collections date from 1972 to present day and cover all craft disciplines including: ceramics, glass, textiles, furniture, metalwork, jewellery, lettering and bookbinding. The current collecting policy prioritises original work that embodies rich learning potential, especially in its physical and tactile qualities for handling, as well as makers' conceptual or narrative approaches. Since 1979 Crafts Council has been developing a handling Collection to further increase access to contemporary craft and support the rich learning potential.

[CraftsCouncil.org.uk](https://craftscouncil.org.uk)

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