



CHRISTIAN OVONLEN WINS THE BROOKFIELD PROPERTIES CRAFT AWARD 2022

- The Brookfield Properties Craft Award, in partnership with Crafts Council, is a leading craft prize for UK-based artists worth £60,000
- Christian Ovonlen, represented by Intoart, won this year's award for his imaginative, handcrafted print techniques and printed silk textiles influenced by his research into costume and performance stages
- Artworks from the artist's Ballets Russes and Botanical Silk series will be acquired for the Crafts Council Collection by Brookfield Properties alongside paper works and will be exhibited at 99 Bishopsgate and Aldgate Tower from 1 June to 31 July 2022
- Ovonlen is the third artist to win the award, following Anna Ray in 2021 and Matt Smith in 2020



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

London, 24 February 2022

Intoart's Christian Ovonlen has been announced as the winner of the Brookfield Properties Craft Award for 2022. Ovonlen won the Award, a leading craft prize for UK-based artists worth £60,000, for his Ballets Russes series of theatrical, hand painted and printed silks.

Ovonlen joined Intoart, a London-based collective of artists and designers with learning disabilities and autism, in 2013, where he developed a practice inspired by his interest in pop culture, fashion and costume design. For Collect 2022, 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 Victoria & Albert Museum and internationally held archives.

His practice begins in drawing – known for his use of bold colours and lavish textures, the artist 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. The new collection he presented at Collect 2022 was a laboured process developed over a period of nine months, from April to December 2021.

Christian Ovonlen – 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 and being shortlisted alongside Internationally renowned artist-makers 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.”*

The Brookfield Properties Craft Award gives the winning artist and associated gallery financial support and a solo exhibition and acquires their work into the national Crafts Council Collection, a major public asset which holds over 1,700 objects acquired from the 1970s onwards.

As part of the Award, Ovonlen will receive curatorial and production support to stage an exhibition across Brookfield Properties’ 99 Bishopsgate and Aldgate Tower. Artworks from Ovonlen’s Ballets Russes and Botanical Silk series, which will be acquired by Brookfield Properties alongside paper works as a gift to the Crafts Council Collection, will be central to the exhibition, which will open to the public on 1 June 2022.

The artist was selected as the Award winner by Annabelle Campbell and Saff Williams, curators at Crafts Council and Brookfield Properties respectively. His work won from a shortlist of five nominated artists, which included Anthony Amoako-Attah (represented by Bullseye Projects), Dawn Bendick (represented by Joanna Bird Contemporary Collections), Cecilia Charlton (represented by Candida Stevens Gallery) and Irina Razumovskaya (represented by Officine Saffi).

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 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 UK's national heritage, the Crafts Council public collection. Congratulations to Christian Ovonlen on being the recipient of the third Brookfield Properties Craft Award."

Saff Williams – Curatorial Director, Brookfield Properties, said: *"We are so proud to award the 2022 Award to Christian Ovonlen. When Annabelle Campbell and I walked into the Intoart studio in Peckham, we were 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 and art into our reception spaces."*

Christian Ovonlen's solo exhibition will be on view at Brookfield Properties' 99 Bishopsgate and Aldgate Tower from 1 June to 31 July 2022.

- Ends -

Notes to Editors

About Christian Ovonlen

Christian Ovonlen's work for Collect 2022 references Ballets Russes and 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 Victoria and Albert Museum 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 Intoart

Intoart is an art and design studio based in London (UK). 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, sensory, physical disabilities and autism. 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

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)

About Collect

Collect: the leading international fair for contemporary craft and design

25-27 Feb 2022 (Previews 23-24 Feb)

online at Artsy.net :23 Feb – 6 Mar

Held in the stunning setting of Somerset House in central London, Collect is one of the world's most influential fairs focusing on contemporary craft and design and living artists.

Now in its 18th year, Collect is selected by a panel of experts and the exhibiting galleries represent some of the most exciting international craft artists working today, from the emerging to the established.

The fair's aim is to introduce and cultivate purchasing audiences and Collect provides an excellent opportunity for art consultants, interiors specialists, collectors, museum curators, design practitioners and wider enthusiasts to purchase and invest in exceptional pieces made in the last five years.

Works span many craft disciplines including ceramics, glass, lacquer, art jewellery, precious metalwork, textiles and fibre, wood and paper to works using non-traditional materials including resin and bone.

Collect is widely acknowledged by the artists and galleries taking part, as the pinnacle event in their field, and many create and commission new work especially for the fair.

www.craftscouncil.org.uk/collect-art-fair

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

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 375 million square feet of real estate in gateway markets on behalf of Brookfield, a global alternative asset manager. 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

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Images

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