



ALICE KETTLE

Within Each Other, Portraits of Ourselves



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by Alice Kettle

Textiles offer a powerful medium through which to explore themes of cultural heritage, journeys and displacement. This exploration was central to Alice Kettle's ambitious *Thread Bearing Witness* project shown at The Whitworth, Manchester in 2018. Through this project Kettle connected communities and individuals across the UK with the making of three monumental works inspired by the strength, resilience, and hospitality of refugees and asylum seekers. This new project *Within Each Other, Portraits of Ourselves*, launched as part of *Threading Forms* curated by Candida Stevens for the London Art Fair, sees Alice extending her reach beyond the UK, to incorporate communities around the world.

As part of the Karachi Biennale¹⁹, Alice worked with groups of women in Pakistan to co-create a stitched piece. These same women, supported with public funding from the National Lottery through Arts Council England, contribute to this series of portraits by offering floral motifs and decorative backgrounds which Alice incorporates into her work. This project has brought together expert stitchers from villages and communities in the Sindh province. Individuals from Syria, Iran and Uganda, now based in the UK, are also contributors to these portraits. Alice is engaging with these groups and individuals as part of an on-going relationship to support sustainable practice and empower communities. Alice is passionate about sustaining traditional stitch ancestral knowledge, alongside new and emerging techniques, as part of the rich vocabulary of stitch. By working with these communities she is encouraging the retention of their knowledge and their cultural identity.

Alice Kettle's new series of portraits can be seen in the context of this opening out of her practice to engage more emphatically through stitch with others. This reflects the ability of stitch to intersect across divided spaces and connect with others through a common language of making. Textiles and pattern have historically migrated, facilitated by the movement of people and trade. Agile and mobile, textile is a material carrier for the imagery and symbolism of stories. These new works create a quiet space for action where stitch can encounter what it means to be human. The works simultaneously explore individual and collective identity, divided and shared through social and political circumstances.

In her role as Professor at Manchester School of Art, Alice Kettle has researched the meeting place of traditional analogue stitching skills and digitised contemporary methodologies. She has developed a unique practice, creating textile works which employ a combination of stitch techniques, combining the use of antique machines from early last century with hand stitch and contemporary digital technology.

This series of portraits consists of layers of imagery, so appropriate for a series of portraits, for we ourselves consist of layers, some apparent, some hidden. Initial pastel drawings are scanned and printed on fabric, they are then overlaid with hand and machine stitching using the threads to 'paint' areas of gestural colour and texture and to 'paint in' the collaborative elements. Metallic threads shimmer, and obscured backgrounds suggest the possibility of hidden figures. Enticing and engaging this work explores new territory for Alice, created on a domestic scale, while looking closely at the individual and the community simultaneously. The works examine notions of identity, of authorship and of stitch as a medium of integration across borders and technologies, but also at the mystery of the individual and its place within and without these borders. Kettle's *Within Each Other, Portraits of Ourselves* is supported with public funding from the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

Elsewhere in 2020 Alice Kettle presents a solo show of work at Saïd Business School, Oxford *Alice Kettle, Threads of Change* from January to April and is an invited artist for "*Untitled, 2020*" at Punta Dogana, Venice curated by Thomas Houseago, Caroline Bourgeois and Muna El Fituri with the Pinault Collection from March to December.

Candida Stevens, 2020.





Family Gathering, 2019 by Alice Kettle

Hand and Machine Stitch on Printed Fabric

130 x 220 cm

With contributions from RLCC, Behbud and Indus Resource Centre, Pakistan





Beneath the Tree, 2019 by Alice Kettle
Hand and Machine Stitch on Printed Fabric
93 x 167 cm
With contributions from Assma, Syria



Portrait of Isa, 2019 by Alice Kettle
Hand and Machine Stitch on Printed Fabric
92 x 54 cm



Woman Thinking, 2019 by Alice Kettle
Hand and Machine Stitch on Printed Fabric
95 x 60 cm
With contributions from RLCC, Behbud, Indus Resource Centre, Pakistan



Portrait of Nel, 2019 by Alice Kettle
Hand and Machine Stitch on Printed Fabric
84 x 60 cm



Portrait of Rosa's Child, 2019 by Alice Kettle
Hand and Machine Stitch on Printed Fabric
73 x 54.5 cm



Mother and Child II, 2019 by Alice Kettle
Hand and Machine Stitch on Printed Fabric
84 x 60 cm



Woman and Baby, 2019 by Alice Kettle
Hand and Machine Stitch on Printed Fabric
77 x 60 cm
With contributions from RLCC, Behbud, Indus Resource Centre, Pakistan



Mother and Baby, Red, 2019 by Alice Kettle
Hand and Machine Stitch on Printed Fabric
76 x 59 cm
With contributions from RLCC, Behbud, Indus Resource Centre, Pakistan



Portrait of Black and Blue, 2019 by Alice Kettle
Hand and Machine Stitch on Printed Fabric
81 x 55 cm



Three Women, 2019 by Alice Kettle
Hand and Machine Stitch on Printed Fabric
42 x 35 cm
With contributions from Susan Kamara, Uganda



Us As One, 2019 by Alice Kettle
Hand and Machine Stitch on Printed Fabric
44 x 29 cm
With contributions from Assma, Syria



Mother and Child, 2019

Hand and machine stitch on printed fabric

37 x 30 cm

With contributions from RLCC, Behbud, Indus Resource Centre, Pakistan



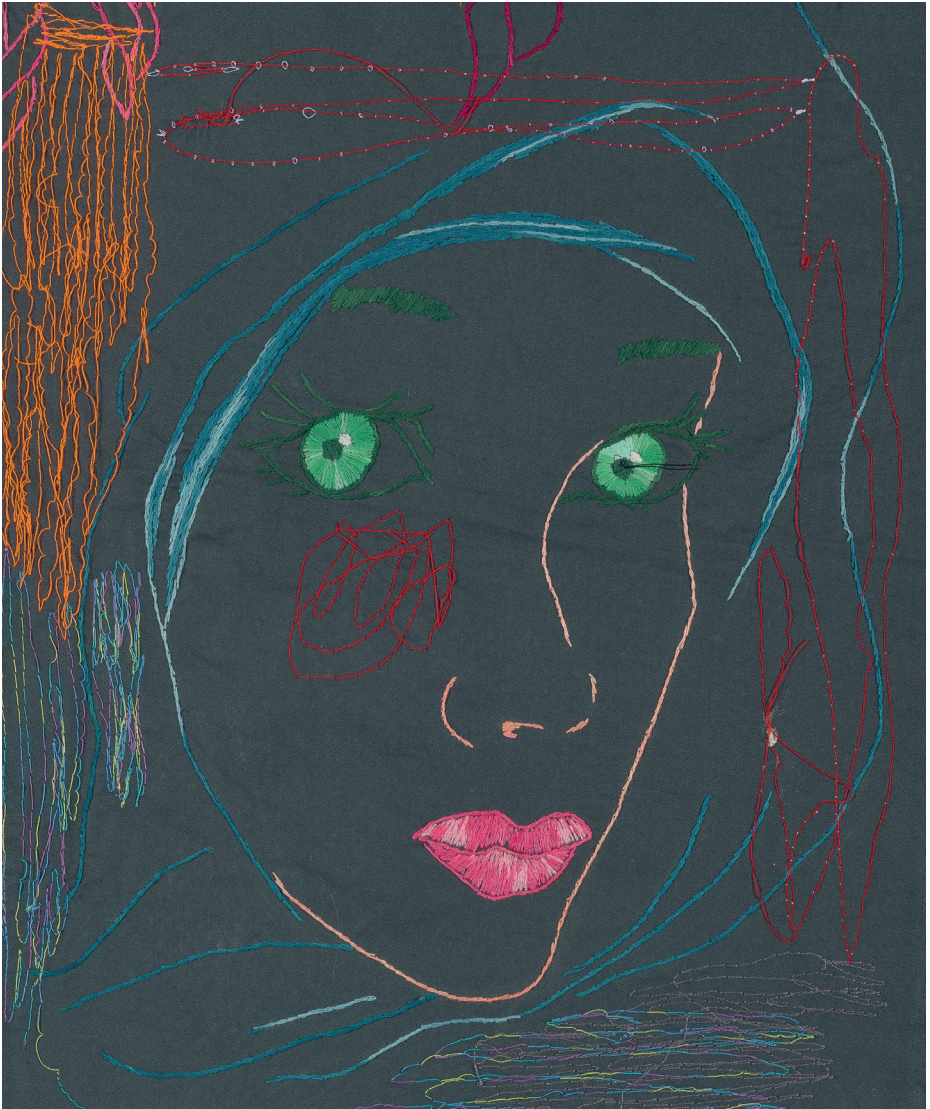
Portrait of Mouti, 2019 by Alice Kettle
Hand and Machine Stitch on Printed Fabric
38 x 28 cm



Blue Head, 2019 by Alice Kettle
Hand and Machine Stitch on Printed Fabric
39 x 30 cm



Green Girl, 2019 by Alice Kettle
Hand and Machine Stitch on Printed Fabric
32 x 26 cm
With contributions from Assma, Syria



Green Eyed Girl, 2019
Hand and machine stitch on printed fabric
35 x 30 cm
With contributions from Monica, Iran

Alice Kettle is currently Professor of Textile Arts, MIRIAD, Manchester School of Art, Manchester Metropolitan University

Education:

- 1979–84 University of Reading BA Hons Fine Art
- 1985–86 Goldsmiths' College Postgraduate Diploma in Textile Art
with special commendation
- 2014 Manchester School of Art, MMU Pd.D student

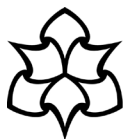
Selected Solo Exhibitions:

- 2017 Alice Kettle, Threads, Winchester Discovery Centre
- 2017 Alice Kettle, More Threads, Candida Stevens Gallery
- 2016 Alice Kettle, Prazeres Gallery, Madeira Island
- 2015 Here and Now, Circus performance Alice Kettle, Circus and CAA
Gallery, London
- 2014 Alice Kettle Odyssey, Pallant House Gallery, Chichester
- 2013 The Garden of England, The Queens House, The National
Maritime Museum Greenwich London
- 2012 Alice Kettle, ANU School of Art, Australia
- 2012 The Shape of Touch, Merston Gallery
- 2010 Telling Fortunes, Platt Hall, Museum of Costume, Manchester
- 2009/11 Allegory Craft Study Centre, Farnham and tour; Dorchester
Museum; The Gallery in the Bay Cardiff; Farfield Mill Sedburgh;
The Willis Museum Basingstoke
- 2009 A Pause in the Rhythm of Time, Belger Arts Centre, Kansas City,
Surface Design Association, USA
- 2006 Salisbury Arts Centre
- 2003-5 Mythscapes : Bankfield Museum, Halifax; Touring to Birmingham;
The Gallery, Ruthin Craft Centre; Southampton City Art
Gallery; Hove Museum and Art Gallery; Brewery Arts, Kendal; South
Hill Park, Bracknell; Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum; Grace
Barrand Design Centre, Surrey, Myles Meehan Gallery, Darlington;
Harley Gallery, Worksop
- 2003 Featured Artist, The Knitting and Stitching Show, London,
Dublin and Harrogate
- 2002 Newbury Spring Festival
- 1992 Salisbury Playhouse
- 1991 Galerie Filambule, Lausanne, Switzerland
- 1990 My Eyes, Your Hands, Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal
- 1990 Alice Kettle – Showcase, ICA, London
- 1988 Oxford Gallery
- 1988 Quay Art Centre, Newport, Isle of Wight
- 1987 University College Chichester
- 1987 Painting and Textiles, Oxford Gallery
- 1986 Oxford Gallery

Public Collections:

Ararat Art Gallery, Victoria, Australia
Belger Collection, Kansas City USA
Calderdale MBC: Museums and Arts
Crafts Council of Great Britain
Hampshire Museums Services
Hove Museum & Art Gallery
Liverpool International Slavery Museum
Manchester City Art Gallery, (ceramic collaboration with Alex McErlain)
Museo Internazionale delle Arti Applicate Oggi, Turin, Italy
Museum of Decorative Art and Design, Riga, Latvia
Platt Hall Gallery of Costume. Manchester
Portsmouth City Art Gallery
Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead
Special Collections Gallery, Manchester Metropolitan University (ceramic collaboration with Alex McErlain)
Southampton City Art Gallery
St Mary's College, Baltimore, USA
The Otter Art Gallery, University College Chichester
The Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester
The Embroiderers' Guild
The Prudential Collection
The Broadgate Club, London.
The Embroiderers' Guild, NSW, Australia
York Castle Museum Gallery (ceramic collaboration with Alex McErlain)

A full biography can be found online at www.candidastevens.com



**Manchester
Metropolitan
University**

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SCHOOL OF ART**

With many thanks to all the contributors.

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