

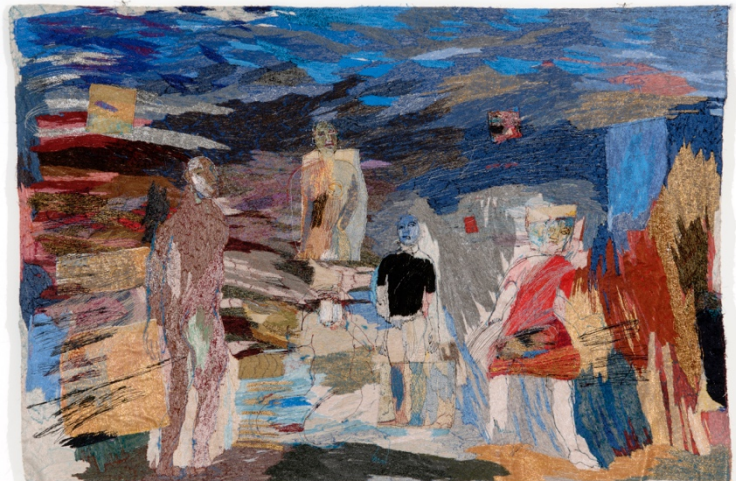


INTERVIEW WITH ALICE KETTLE, EMBROIDERER

Alice Kettle has established a unique area of practice in stitch, consistently and on an unparalleled scale. She is currently Research Associate at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Her work is represented in various public collections; the Crafts Council, the Whitworth Art Gallery

Manchester and the Museo Internazionale delle Arti Applicate Oggi, Turin, Italy. Commissions include the National Library of Australia, the Scottish High Court in Edinburgh, Gloucester and Winchester Cathedrals and the School of Music & Drama at Manchester University.



Did you undertake formal training in college or within the industry, or did you find your ways into embroidery via a different route?

I studied Fine Art Painting for my degree and then Textile art at Goldsmiths College, London as a postgraduate.

How would you describe your work and your position within the world of embroidery?

I make figurative pieces. I think I am a maker, I love stitching. This doesn't mean that it is without intellect since every mark and thought require a creative

response which articulates my response to the world, to life and my particular aspirations.

It is about an emotional connection with the work, the expression of something that stitch conveys differently from other media. I am not sure about my position. I don't really mind very much about that. I



just do what i do. I exhibit in galleries if they want me, and I do commissions when asked. I earn my living from my work which inevitably means to a large extent whether I like it or not, it is driven by those concerns.

What type of material do you prefer to use?

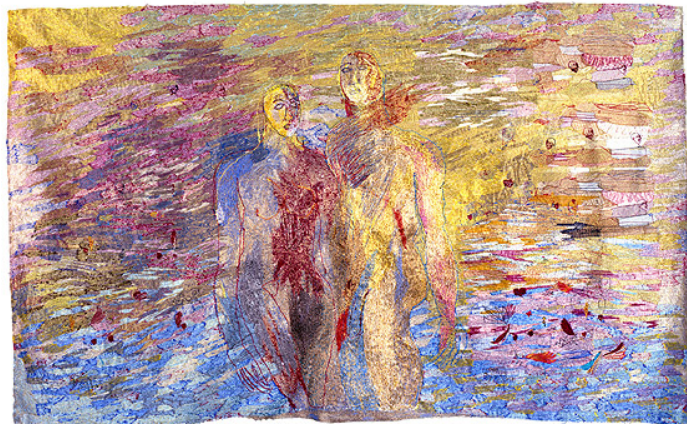
I use thread, all different thicknesses and types and mixtures. This is stitched onto a back cloth.

What would you like to make that you haven't so far?

I would like to explore the use of the Schiffli machine which they have at Manchester Metropolitan University. I have done three pieces on this machine and feel have just seen a whole new world open up. It is a repeat machine with 85 needles and this one in particular is more than 100 years old. It works with a pantograph system. In using it I feel I have liberated the fabric, which for me is extraordinary.

What inspires and influences the designs you create for your work?

I recently did a body of work based on the Odyssey by Homer. Also Paulo Coehlo's the Alchemist. Books, poems, people, places, thoughts, fears, connections, stories. If I



am doing a commission it is connected to the site, I am doing a huge piece for Winchester Discovery Centre which contains aspects of the city's history and iconography.

Find out more about Alice Kettle at her website www.alicekettle.com.