

**ALLISTAIR COVELL**  
*CANVAS TO CARPET*

8 February – 5 May 2019

Broadway Gallery,  
Letchworth Garden CityAllistair Covell, *Symphony Suite IV (Remix)*, iPad drawing, 2016

The Broadway Gallery presents *Canvas To Carpet*, the first major solo exhibition of the British artist Allistair Covell. The exhibition will present a series of Covell's synaesthetic inspired abstract hand-knotted carpets as the centrepiece to a display that surveys the artist's creative practice over the last five years.

The carpets, or 'woven paintings' as Covell refers to them, have been handcrafted in Afghanistan by Turquoise Mountain and in Nepal by Rug-Maker to the artist's designs. The exhibition will showcase how the weavers have masterfully interpreted the rhythmic energy and spontaneity of Covell's paintings as each expressive brush stroke; splash of colour and complex shape has been translated into a woven knot. The preparatory paintings, iPad sketches and ink drawings that Covell supplies to the carpet weavers will also be on display alongside their textile counterparts.

Commenting on the exhibition, curator Laura Dennis said, "The Broadway Gallery is very excited to be able to host Covell's first major solo exhibition which focuses on his creative journey from canvas to carpet. Visitors will be able to experience the 'woven paintings' up close as the carpets are adorning the walls of the gallery in a celebration of them as objets d'art".

Each carpet in the exhibition, much like Covell's paintings and drawings, vary in style and composition. Some carpets are more 'painterly' in appearance while others have a distinctive bold Pop Art aesthetic, inspired by Covell's colourful plasticine sculptures and iPad sketches. One carpet perfectly resembles its ink-pen drawing counterpart, owing to the carpet's high knot count and monotone pattern, a dramatic departure from Covell's normal kaleidoscopic colour palette.

These carpet characteristics not only reflect Covell's diverse artistic handwriting, translated into woven form, but also reveal the specific heritage and traditions of carpet production in both Afghanistan and Nepal; highlighting the differences in the wool, the knotting techniques and how the yarns are dyed. Accompanying the exhibition are short films that show the different making processes, granting visitors the opportunity to witness the craftsmanship and various stages involved in production.

Laura adds, "it will be really interesting to see Covell's expressive paintings hang alongside the finished carpets, creating a unique exhibition that will inspire conversation".

**Note to Editors****About Allistair Covell**

Allistair Covell creates vibrantly colourful and rhythmic abstract paintings, inspired by his synaesthetic responses to sound. Synaesthesia is a neurological phenomenon, a condition best described as 'a

union of the senses' where one sensory experience prompts another. For Covell synaesthesia grants him the ability to see colour upon hearing sound. Colour is an integral ingredient in Covell's work and he uses it with real confidence, describing music through gestural brush strokes and creating bold shapes, perfectly capturing the spontaneity and abstract fluidity of music on a surface. Covell's painted artworks are also abstract recordings of places, people and events.

In 2014, Covell won the inaugural Best Young Designer Award at the 9th Carpet Design Awards at Domotex Hannover in Germany. A Carpet Design Award is an international accolade of distinction and awarded in recognition for design excellence and quality in hand-made carpets. The award was Covell's first experience of creating a composition for a woven textile and encouraged him to slightly refocus his practice.

Covell has worked on various projects with international organisations, companies and initiatives including AfghanMade, Arts Thread, Campaign for Wool, Craig & Rose Paints, Calzada Fox and continues to work with Rug-Maker and Turquoise Mountain. Covell has exhibited his work at the Saatchi Gallery and Decorex International in London, and has shown his carpets during the London Design Festival in 2015, 2017 and 2018.

In 2015 he received royal recognition from HRH The Prince of Wales for his textile artwork *Digital Stitch*, created in collaboration with Think Positive Prints UK, when it was acquired by the National Wool Museum in Wales, becoming part of their permanent textile collection.

Covell is a graduate of the University of the Arts London with a BA (Hons) in Surface Design and holds a Foundation Degree with Distinction in Fashion and Textile Design from the University of Bedfordshire.

Since 2014 Covell has been a fellow of the Digswell Arts Trust, a 60-year-old arts organisation that supports emerging artists and in 2017 he was invited to become a member of Design-Nation, the premium portfolio for Craft, Design and Product in the UK.

## About Broadway Gallery

Broadway Gallery is a charitable service of the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, a self-funding charitable organisation that invests profits from its property portfolio to maintain and enhance the world's first Garden City for the long-term benefit of local communities. The Gallery, which is housed in a covered shopping arcade dating from 1922, presents exhibitions spanning the visual arts, craft and design, displaying work by internationally acclaimed practitioners as well as local and emerging talent.

Since opening in 2016, Broadway Gallery has shown retrospectives of the work of artists Richard Smith and Gordon House, alongside exhibitions including Kate Terry, Michael Brennand-Wood and Rebecca Louise Law, and recently an exhibition in collaboration with the Crafts Council and a Hayward touring show of screenprints by Sir Eduardo Paolozzi.

Broadway Gallery  
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