

## Intoart x John Smedley

Ground-breaking design collaboration launches on 15 November



Andre Williams holding his "YES" woolen jumper.

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Next month, inclusive art studio **Intoart** launches its debut fashion line in a first-of-its kind collaboration with the legendary British knitwear brand **John Smedley**.

A capsule collection of nine dynamic and eye-catching designs created by three Intoart artists will be unveiled exclusively in John Smedley's **London** shops and **online** in mid-November. It includes unisex jumpers, dresses, scarves and shawls – all featuring hand-drawn designs created exclusively for John Smedley in the Intoart studio.

This is Intoart's first foray into fashion. For the last 18 years, the South London studio has worked with people with learning disabilities practising as artists to develop pathways to success and recognition in the fields of contemporary art and design – by providing studio space, supporting their practice, and forging high-profile exhibition partnerships and collaborations. Never before, however, has Intoart teamed up with one of the biggest British fashion brands to create its own range of apparel.

Thanks to the support and intervention of the designer Holly Fulton, a long-standing collaborator with both Intoart and John Smedley, the two organisations have come together to deliver what is a landmark project for both. For Intoart, the collection represents the most significant commercial impact that the organisation has had on the design industry to date.

The collection will launch for retail in John Smedley shops on 15 November and will be showcased in the stores' celebrated Christmas window displays.

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## THE ARTISTS

Three of the 21 artists based at Intoart's studio space in Peckham Levels have created designs for the collection, each having three of their hand-drawn artworks translated from paper into wool by the John Smedley team.

**Yoshiko Phillips** joined Intoart in 2015. She has a bold, graphic illustrative style full of complex motifs, dazzling colours and engaging characters, which she deploys on fashion items, accessories, stationery and prints. Phillips' ink works on paper are inspired by traditional Japanese embroidery, textiles and block-printed Ukiyo-e art.

Phillips's work often draws on mythical creatures and animal imagery. For John Smedley, she has created a series of eye-catching patterns in Blaze Orange that evoke the notions of predator and prey.

**Ntiense Eno Amooquaye** joined the Intoart collective in 2007. She works across the visual, written and spoken word through print, text, image and live performance. She has exhibited and performed in galleries and museums around the UK and internationally. Her bespoke placement-print silk dress was exhibited in the V&A fashion galleries as part of London Design Festival 2017.

With accents in Cerise Pink, Amooquaye's designs explore the iconography of fashion and its embodiment in the image of the fashion model.

**Andre Williams** has been a member of the Intoart collective since 2010. His work is characterised by arresting imagery and dramatic, often humorous typography. Williams applies his graphic drawing style and striking use of colour to screenprint and painted laser-cut wood reliefs of masks, robots and mystical creatures.

His John Smedley knits feature his signature attention-grabbing typographical style and wry wit, using Azure Blue to add emphasis to his high-impact comical messages.



(Left) Yoshiko Phillips woolen dress. (Middle) Ntiense Eno Amooquaye woolen jumper. (Right) Andre Williams woolen jumper.

*'The Intoart x John Smedley collection exemplifies Intoart's vision to nurture creative collaborations that celebrate the extraordinary talents working in the studio. The three artists working alongside Holly and James have created knitwear that speaks to their own strong sense of line colour and style. Presenting Yoshiko Phillips, Andre Williams and Ntiense Eno Amooquaye in such a bold and confident collection means that Intoart can make the case to the design industry and our supporters that so much is possible when our creatives are given opportunities and taken seriously as artists and designers.'*

– **Ella Ritchie**, co-founder and Director, Intoart

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## THE PROCESS

The artists worked closely with Holly Fulton and illustrator James Lambert to explore their creative interests and develop their ideas. Earlier this year, they visited the John Smedley mill in Matlock, Derbyshire, to gain an in-depth understanding of the process from design to finished garment, and to develop an appreciation of impact of the production methods on design possibilities. With creative guidance from Holly and James and technical expertise from the John Smedley design team, the trio were able to ensure that their final designs were true to the original lines, and that their distinctive visual language and bold colours were preserved in the transition from paper to wool.

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*'We did not want the shape of the garments to dictate how the artists approached the project in any way, so we continued to explore their individual trains of thought while making them aware of the constraints of the medium. Through our discussions with Intoart, we knew they wanted to end up with products that would be considered within the serious fashion arena and which would stand up as pieces in their own right. We ended up with a collection that represents the dynamism, creativity and strength of Intoart as an organisation – and of these three artists in particular.'*

– **Holly Fulton**, Creative Lead of the Intoart x John Smedley collection

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## THE LAUNCH

The Intoart collection of nine garments will launch in John Smedley shops on Brook Street, Jermyn Street and New Cavendish Street, London, on Thursday 15 November 2018, where it will be centre stage in the Christmas window displays.

All garments will be available to buy from [johnsmedley.co.uk](http://johnsmedley.co.uk).

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*'The artists and our knitwear designers have done an incredible job. The collaborative garments showcase a fantastic blend of creative design, talent and craftsmanship and all in a wonderful crescendo of colours and the highest-quality materials. We can't wait to see the consumer reaction when they are launched in store!'*

– **Jess McGuire-Dudley**, Marketing & Design Director at John Smedley

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## NOTES FOR EDITORS

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### About Intoart

Intoart is an art and design studio supporting the work of 21 artists and designers working in illustration, fashion, ceramics, product and graphic design. Founded in 2001 by Ella Ritchie and Sam Jones, Intoart began as an eight-week project to respond to a lack of high-quality arts education and limited opportunities for people with learning disabilities. Determined to challenge preconceptions and overturn prejudices, Intoart aims to provide a platform for people with learning disabilities to become both visible and equal in the art world – not merely applauded for participating, but recognised and respected as creatives in their own right. Since its foundation, Intoart has realised exhibitions, commissions and research projects with contemporary art galleries and museums in the UK and internationally, including Victoria and Albert Museum, Tate, Southbank Centre, Whitechapel Gallery and Studio Voltaire. It is supported by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

[intoart.org.uk](http://intoart.org.uk)

Twitter @intoart\_london

Facebook /intoart.london

Instagram @intoart\_uk

### About John Smedley

Royal warrant holder John Smedley is renowned throughout the world as a leader in the production of fine gauge knitwear products. Founded in 1784 at Lea Mills, Matlock, Derbyshire – now the oldest manufacturing factory in the world – the company crafts beautiful, high quality garments that are designed to last, made in Britain and distributed across the globe.

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johnsmedley.com

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#### About Holly Fulton

The Holly Fulton Studio offers a unique and ambitious approach to design. With roots firmly placed in fashion and textiles, and witty hand-drawn print at the heart of its output, the award-winning label has grown over the past 10 years to encompass multidisciplinary collaborations ranging from bespoke interiors, prestige packaging and capsule collections to consultancy and creative direction. A distinctive sense of graphic luxury, an understanding of innovative craftsmanship and a love of fitting pattern to projects inform the studio's ethos, as well as a passion for the creative process from in-depth research to the finessing of ideas.

hollyfulton.com

Facebook /studiofulton

Instagram @studio\_fulton

#### About James Lambert

The award-winning East London-based illustrator has worked extensively across a broad range of graphic and illustrative projects, with clients ranging from Liberty and Selfridges to the Serpentine Gallery and Tate. Known for his individual approach to line and surrealist references, he has been creative directing the label Holly Fulton alongside the designer since 2012.

jameslambert.co.uk

Instagram @jameslambertstudio

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### CONTACT

For more information about Intoart, the artists it works with and the John Smedley collaboration, please contact Dorothy Bourne at [dorothy@zetteler.co.uk](mailto:dorothy@zetteler.co.uk) or on +44 (0)20 3735 5855.

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