



SCHOOLS

ARTIST SEEKS BLANKET COVERAGE FOR COVID-19 QUILT PROJECT

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UEL artist creates sense of shared experience with art project

A University of East London artist has given staff at a top law firm a sense of a shared experience and solidarity during quarantine with a new art project.

The art quilt, entitled *We Are All In This Together*, is the creation of internationally renowned artist Susan Stockwell and forms part of her artist-in-residency at London law firm Pinsent Masons.

Ms Stockwell has managed to keep the project going despite suffering from the virus herself, experiencing bouts of total exhaustion and reoccurring symptoms. She said, "I am delighted to be on the road to recovery. It has been a long six weeks.

"Originally the aim was to produce a work around the theme of the times we live in from a personal, philosophical or political perspective. We had regular drop-in workshops for staff where they made a swatch, discussed ideas and took materials away to work with.

"With the Covid-19 crisis and lockdown, no one could have predicted how much more relevant the project would become. The original brief still stands, but now the project and participants have a new focus, more to say and a greater need to find a creative and therapeutic outlet. The quilt gives voice to a sense of shared experience and solidarity during quarantine, expressed creatively by staff through contributions."

Professor Verity Brown, pro-vice chancellor (impact and innovation), said, "As a university, we are committed to ensuring what we do has a meaningful impact on society. The University of East London is playing a vital role in the fight against Covid-19 and it is great to see such a creative response, helping to keep people connected in these challenging times."

Ms Stockwell's work, including sculptures and wall-based pieces, is already installed at Pinsent Masons' London offices, and curated by [Maggie O'Regan, InSitu ArtConsultants](#).

The work has evolved out of a series of similar projects dating back to *Tea Bag Quilt*, a work she made in 1998 when she was living and teaching in the USA. At the time she was researching the [Gees Bend Quiltmakers](#) – a collective of African American craftswomen from Alabama – and the American tradition of patchwork quilting that brought women together to share stories and support each other.

The artwork is addressing people's need to make and express themselves creatively in ways that are different to their everyday activities as well as providing something to do for those who have more time on their hands.

Ms Stockwell added, "Lockdown is a good time to be creative and to try something new. Making and sewing processes have proven to be relaxing and meditative, as well as therapeutic and healing. During this time many are experiencing heightened levels of anxiety and doing this activity can help."

An established international artist working across sculpture, installation, collage and film, she is a part-time senior lecturer at the University. She has exhibited widely, including at the Tate Modern and the

Victoria and Albert Museum, and locations in the USA, China, Taiwan and other countries.

There will be a launch event for *We are All In This Together* when it is completed and deemed safe for a public gathering.

To follow Susan Stockwell and find out more, visit her [website](#).