

ART & PHILANTHROPY / PHILANTHROPY

Ai Weiwei, Idris Khan et al create artworks with inmates for Sotheby's exhibition

Sotheby's London will showcase the work of leading artists - from Ai Weiwei to Cornelia Parker and Idris Khan - created in collaboration with inmate artisans supported by the charity Fine Cell Work



A detail from *Odyssey in Quilting* (2019), a collaborative embroidery between Ai Weiwei and 13 inmates across eight prisons | Image: © Ai Weiwei/courtesy Fine Cell Work

WHERE TO FIND

Sotheby's, 34-35 New Bond Street, London W1A ([sothebys.com](https://www.sothebys.com)); 26 February-3 March.

FEBRUARY 20 2020 / MARIANNA GIUSTI



On 26 February, Sotheby's London will unveil *Human Touch*, an exhibition of artworks created by British inmates supported by the charity Fine Cell Work in collaboration with international contemporary artists, including Ai Weiwei, Idris Khan and Francis Upritchard.



Numbers - A Hand-sewn Photograph (2019), created by Idris Khan and an inmate called Ben. It represents the marks drawn on cell walls to count time | Image: © Idris Khan/courtesy Fine Cell Work

The extraordinary textile designs are the fruit of months-long exchanges between the artists and artisans. "Finally, you reach the point when I would say it is perfect," Ai Weiwei wrote to his team of 13 inmates across eight prisons on completion of their collaborative artwork. The piece - an intricate hand-embroidered black-and-white quilt spanning over four square metres - depicts the travels of migrants across borders, a recurring theme of the artist's art and activism. One inmate named Ben said of the project: "For this work to be stitched by people who have their own battles and struggles truly shows what this piece is about."