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British Ceramics Biennial unveils 22 new talents to show at FRESH exhibition

The British Ceramics Biennial (BCB) announces its selection for FRESH, the festival's regular showcase of the UK's most promising graduate talent from across the ceramic disciplines. Twenty-two new makers will present work in the FRESH exhibition at the former Spode factory in Stoke-on-Trent – from 26 September to 8 November 2015.

The curated exhibition of new ceramic work by recent graduates highlights the importance of higher education for the future of ceramics and is one of the most anticipated elements of the BCB programme. Not only does it provide an important launch pad for the new wave of artists but also acts as a focal point for those keen to discover tomorrow's stars.

Among the FRESH 2015 exhibitors are James Duck and Michael Wild who play with ideas of authorship and ownership whilst Ragna Mouritzen (Danish Embassy Art Prize) draws with clay using digital technologies. Several of the artists take very individual approaches to exploring the material properties of clay and its expressive potential including Jongjin Park, Claudia Wassiczek, Gemma Dardis, Kate Haywood, Vilas Silverton, Charlotte Baker, Claire Mace and Tessa Eastman. Michelle Lam investigates the relationship between light and ceramics and potential architectural application.

Artists with a strong design-led focus include Eva Radulova (winner Potclays 2015), Hannah Tounsend (winner 2015 John Lewis Loves Award at New Designers 2015, Absolut Award 2015 at New Designers), Hyu-Jin Jo, Natalie Wood, Eleanora Orly Edlavitch, and Katie Schwab who is interested in communal dining situations. The domestic and tableware is counterbalanced with installation works by Gail Mahon (winner Waterloo Commemorative Plate Design 2014), Alex Simpson, Tana West and Rhiannon Lewando.

Most noticeable is the presence of Cardiff Metropolitan University and Royal College of Arts: Almost half of the selected artists (10) have studied or are currently studying at either of them (5/5).



The twenty-two FRESH talents will not only exhibit at the BCB but also get the chance to win prizes; from a one-month residency at Guldagergaard, the international Ceramics Research Centre in Denmark, to an opportunity to exhibit at BCB 2017, or one of three Scholarship placements at Staffordshire University's MA in Ceramic Design. The decision will be made by the selection panel and the Ceramic Advisory Board at Guldagergaard during the festival.

Linda Theophilus, Associate Curator (FRESH) states: “The selection panel for Fresh 2015, had the pleasurable but difficult task of selecting just 22 exhibitors from a very strong application of 153. The final selection, both represents a strong consensus of the panel and the wide range of ceramics being produced by new graduates - from tableware to installation, from drawing with a 3d printer to hand-mixed clay. I'm sure it will prove to be a visually exciting exhibition.”

Barney Hare Duke, BCB Artistic Director says: “Fresh showcases the breadth of ceramic design in higher education and showcases the practice of some of the UK's leading emerging artists. The exhibition will be a centrepiece to this year's festival, and provide visitors with an occasion to appreciate the quality of work being achieved within education and an opportunity to buy the work of new makers, investing in their futures.”

BCB 2015 will celebrate the best of contemporary ceramics in Stoke-on-Trent. In its fourth edition, the festival will bring together over 60 artists through exhibitions, installations and events that draw on the heritage and creative edge of Stoke-on-Trent. The biennial is not only a great opportunity to enjoy the best of British ceramic arts and participate in interactive installation, but also a chance to purchase exhibition pieces.

Highlights of this year's biennial are a powerful WW1 Memorial, *Resonate*, the monument and soundscape by artists Steven Dixon and Johnny Magee, will incorporate thousands of white bone china flowers a new installation by leading multi-disciplinary artist Bruce McLean and an interactive “penny arcade machine” piece by Lawrence Epps, *AGAIN*.

Furthermore 2013 AWARD winner Nao Matsunaga will present a ceremonial gathering of his sculptures as a new site-specific installation *Awarded* in the China Hall, inspired by his own experience and interest in Stoke-on-Trent, Neolithic cultures and the former Spode site itself.

FRESH joins the centerpiece exhibition AWARD at the former Spode pottery factory. Following selection by a panel of judges chaired by Alun Graves, Senior Curator at the V&A, eleven artists were shortlisted for its £5,000 prize and will each present new works exemplifying the energy and vitality of British contemporary ceramics. Works range from monumental architectural detail to intricate and intimate contemplative pieces, with conceptual depth, expressive flair and exquisite technical accomplishment.

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Notes to editors

The 22 artists selected for FRESH 2015 are:

Alexandra Simpson, Charlotte Barker, Claire Mace, Claudia Wassiczek, Eva Radulova, Gail Mahon, Gemma Dardis, Hannah Tounsend, Hyu-Jin Jo, James Duck, Jongjin Park, Kate Haywood, Katie Schwab, Michael Wild, Michelle Lam, Natalie Wood, Eleanor Orly Edlavitch, Ragna Mouritzen, Rhiannon Lewando, Tana West, Tessa Eastman, Vilas Silverton

FRESH 2015 selection panel:

Linda Theophilus (BCB), Helen Felcey (Manchester Metropolitan University), Peter Castle (Cardiff School of Art and Design), Sarah Worgan (Fresh winner 2013), Ian McIntyre (Designer Maker), Lisa Gee (Harley Gallery), Natasha Mayo (Cardiff School of Art and Design), Barney Hare Duke (BCB)

Image captions:

- 1 Charlotte Barker, *Paper Scissors Stone*, 2015
- 2 Natalie Wood, *Water carafe from Detsu collection*, 2015
- 3 Gail Mahon, *Reciprosuckle*, 2015
- 4 James Duck, *Life, Death and that moment in-between*, 2015
- 5 Eva Radulova, *Sake Cups*, 2015
- 6 Rhiannon Lewando, *The Salient Dead*, 2015

The 12 artists selected for AWARD 2015 are:

Amy Hughes, Andrea Walsh, Aneta Regal, Anne Gibbs, Bethan Lloyd Worthington, Caroline Tattersall, Ingrid Murphy with Jon Pigot, James Rigler, Mella Shaw, Paul Scott, Sam Bakewell

BCB 2015 other exhibiting artists:

AirSpace, Amy Hughes, Bruce McLean, Charlotte Hodes, Clay Cargo, Dave Sanderson, Ian McIntyre, Jonathan Keep, Johnny Magee, Kate O'Kelly with slip, flux, flock, Lawrence Epps, Matthew Raw, Martin Smith, Michael Eden, Nao Matsunaga, Neil Brownsword, Sarah Worgan, Steve Brown, Steve Dixon, Tony Quinn.

About the British Ceramics Biennial:

The British Ceramics Biennial is a prestigious cultural event taking place in Stoke-on-Trent from 26 September to 8 November 2015. This six-week long festival will present work from the UK's leading contemporary ceramic artists in a series of new exhibitions and special events in the city, embracing the heritage of Stoke-on-Trent as the home of British ceramics, and celebrating the city's creative edge as an international centre for excellence in contemporary ceramics.



The British Ceramics Biennial launched in 2009 as a five-year initiative of residencies, fellowships, commissions, education and enterprise projects from 2009 to 2013 with a major festival every two years. BCB is intended to be a catalyst for regeneration in the region and to create a platform for innovation and excellence celebrating the best in current ceramic design, both nationally and internationally.

The Biennial draws on the historical strengths of the past in championing new future directions for the city.

The Biennial works in partnership with organisations and individuals in the museums, cultural, industry, business, education, community and voluntary sectors across the city in the development and delivery of projects with a particular focus on public engagement.

The festival and supporting Engaged programme will not only highlight and raise the profile of the many ceramics industries still working in Stoke-on-Trent, but will also create commissioning and exhibition opportunities for local ceramic artists as well as national and international artists.

The Clay Foundation:

A new cultural agency and registered charity for Stoke-on-Trent configured into three core components:

- Artists' programme of commissions and residencies, developed in partnership with education culture, industry and community sectors in the city
- British Ceramics Biennial – realising the vision for the 2015 and 2017 festivals
- Ongoing community & education programme

British Ceramics Biennial funders:

The British Ceramics Biennial Ltd is funded by Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Arts Council England and Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

BCB Sponsors:

Staffordshire University, Johnson Tiles, Potclays

BCB Partners:

AirSpace, Appetite, B arts, Contemporary Applied Arts, Craft Potters Association, Mitchell Arts Centre, North Staffordshire Regiment, Spode Museum Trust and The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery

Media Partners:

Ceramic Review, BBC Radio Stoke

