

# British Ceramics Biennial 2011 Stoke-on-Trent

Press Release

14 October 2011

## Winner of £10,000 Spode Award announced at British Ceramics Biennial 2011

Prize celebrating the very best in contemporary ceramics presented to  
Phoebe Cummings for raw clay installation work

Last night, Thursday 13 October 2011, Phoebe Cummings was presented with the £10,000 Spode Award at a ceremony to celebrate the British Ceramics Biennial at The Potters' Club, Stoke-on-Trent. The AWARD promotes and celebrates the energy and innovation of contemporary British ceramics, in the context of its long history in Stoke-on-Trent.

Phoebe Cummings, a graduate from the Royal College of Art, is a ceramic installation artist who works to construct elaborate organic forms directly on site with raw clay. Her work for BCB AWARD, *Fragment*, is taken from *A Place Half Remembered*, a temporary work made from locally-sourced clay, suggestive of the swamps that once covered Staffordshire and how this prehistoric landscape formed the raw materials that later enabled the industrial revolution of Stoke-On-Trent.

Cummings, 30 was selected from a shortlist of 24 artists representing the very best in contemporary creative ceramics design, practice and manufacture. All shortlisted artists are exhibited in the AWARD exhibition at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery. The AWARD exhibition focuses on creativity, innovation and achievement across the breadth of ceramic practice and design. The shortlist was selected from a national open submission of over 160 applications, across three categories of craft, art and design.

The Spode Award is sponsored by the Portmeirion Group, who acquired the Spode brand, which has over 240 years of history in Stoke-on-Trent, in 2009. The original Spode factory has been transformed into the creative hub of this year's British Ceramics Biennial.

Barney Hare Duke, BCB Co-Director and member of Spode Award judging panel comments: "The consistent quality demonstrates the accomplishment and vitality of contemporary ceramic practice in the UK. *Fragment (A Place Half Remembered)* stood out as an extraordinary piece, moving the viewer apprehensively from the past through to an imagined future."

Michael Haynes, Managing Director of Portmeirion Group UK comments: "We are delighted that our sponsorship of the BCB AWARD helps to celebrate the innovation, skill and artistic excellence of the contemporary ceramics industry in Britain. We want to continue the ceramic industry's journey into a new era of revival and vitality and the work of these artists is paramount to that success. Each artist has strived for new levels of excellence and is therefore an example to us all."



Councillor Mark Meredith, Stoke-on-Trent City Council cabinet member for economic development, said: "AWARD received applications from across the UK so competition was tight. With the extent of talent here in the Potteries, highlighted by the number of local artists short-listed, it is fitting that this award is being made here in Stoke-on-Trent – the World Capital of Ceramics. The British Ceramics Biennial is showcasing contemporary ceramics at the highest level and entries to this year's Award highlight that the industry is constantly growing and developing."

The AWARD finalists were: Carina Ciscato, Robert Cooper, Phoebe Cummings, Lowri Davies, Robert Dawson, Stephen Dixon, Ken Eastman, Philip Eglin, James Evans, Chris Keenan, Rob Kessler, IKIK Ceramics, Sun Kim, Peter Lewis, Nao Matsunaga, Craig Mitchell, Katharine Morling, Rosa Nguyen, Merete Rasmussen, Julian Stair, Caroline Tattersall, Andrea Walsh and Dawn Youll. Caroline Tattersall and Rosa Nguyen's work for AWARD is on show at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery and at the original Spode factory site.

The AWARD artists were selected by the Biennial Associates: Alun Graves, Curator of Ceramics & Glass at the V&A, Kevin Oakes, Chief Executive of Steelite International Ltd, Ranti Tjan, Director of the European Ceramic Work Centre in The Netherlands, Ian Vines, Exhibitions Manager at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, and the BCB Co-Directors Barney Hare Duke and Jeremy Theophilus.

The AWARD exhibition is at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery until 11 December 2011 and is one of the flagship exhibitions in the British Ceramics Biennial.

### **Ends**

For more press information, please contact Iliana Taliotis or Matt Railton at Colman Getty on 020 7631 2666 or [matt@colmangetty.co.uk](mailto:matt@colmangetty.co.uk)



## **About the British Ceramics Biennial**

The British Ceramics Biennial is a prestigious cultural event taking place in Stoke-on-Trent from 30 September to 13 November 2011. This six week-long festival of exhibitions, events and activities embraces the heritage of the Potteries as the home of British ceramics, and celebrates the city's creative edge as an international centre for excellence in contemporary ceramics.

The British Ceramics Biennial launched in 2009, is 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 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, 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 BCB Projects 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.

### **British Ceramics Biennial funders:**

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

### **About Portmeirion Group**

Portmeirion Group is a leading ceramics manufacturer based in Stoke-on-Trent renowned for its Portmeirion, Spode, Royal Worcester and Pimpernel brands. After the acquisition of Spode brand in 2009 the company made the welcome decision to return the manufacture of many items in the iconic Blue Italian range back to the UK from the Far East to its factory in Stoke-on-Trent. Today the Group employs around 500 people and has a fully functioning earthenware factory in the heart of The Potteries. The company was recently awarded the Queen's Award for International Trade in recognition of its outstanding success in international trade over the last three years.

For more press information on Portmeirion Group and the Spode brand please contact Jane Reade at Grylls and Reade on 0844 209 0860 or [jane@gryllsandreade.com](mailto:jane@gryllsandreade.com)

