

British Ceramics Biennial 2011 Stoke-on-Trent

Press Release

Sparking history into life with unique installation

As part of the British Ceramics Biennial former Staffordshire University student Peter Lewis has been looking at how World War Two changed the lives of ordinary factory workers in the city.

An exhibition, which will be based at the Original Spode Factory, in Church Street, will celebrate the efforts of local workers more than 70 years ago.

Councillor Mark Meredith, Stoke-on-Trent City Council cabinet member for economic development, said: "The British Ceramics Biennial is not only about showcasing contemporary ceramics but celebrating Stoke-on-Trent's historic connections with the industry. Many people will have worked or know people who worked in city factories such as Spode. This exhibition is a great chance for people to explore and remember the hard work of city factory workers."

During the war Stoke-on-Trent potteries were prevented from firing decorative ware, and many paintresses were drafted into munitions factories to help the war effort. Peter Lewis, whose work features interviews from local workers from the time, celebrates the work of these local heroes in World War Two.

Peter, whose own mother Vera Lewis was born in Basford in 1919 and remembers Stoke-on-Trent at the time, said: "The installation recognises the contribution made by local people and its impact on their daily lives."

During the war radio broadcasts played a significant role in bolstering morale and a number of episodes of the popular radio show *Workers Playtime* were actually recorded live at the Spode factory. Peter has sourced some of the original audio from this show including music and an extract from comedy duo 'Gert & Daisy', plus audio interviews with three workers during the time explaining their experiences.

Visitors to the original Spode site during the BCB festival will be able to sit and listen to this unique audio material on headphones as part of the installation.



The BCB is a six-week festival celebrating contemporary ceramics and is supported by Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Arts Council England and Paul Hamlyn.

For further media enquiries please call Cheryl Smith at Stoke-on-Trent City Council's press office on 01782 232130.



