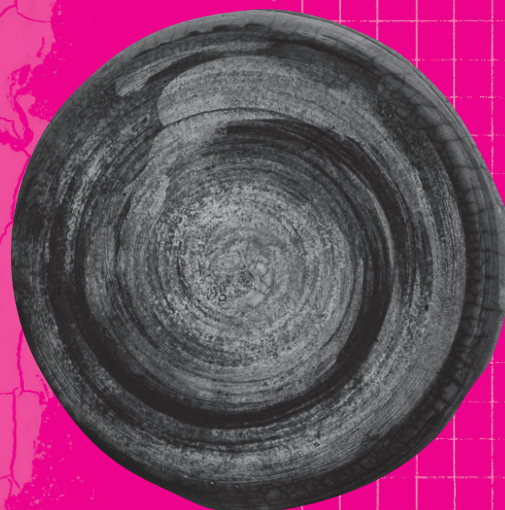
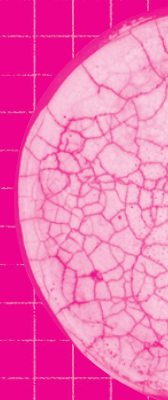




British  
Ceramics  
Biennial

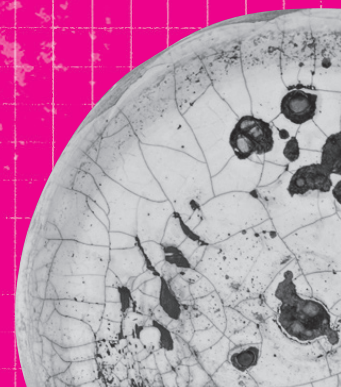


# Stoke Makes Plates 2021

## The Pattern Book

A collection of personal, commemorative  
plates designed and made by Stoke-on-Trent  
community members

[britishceramicsbiennial.com](http://britishceramicsbiennial.com)





Stoke Makes Plates features more than 250 unique plates that have been made and designed by residents of Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Using plates as an artistic canvas, each creator responded in an individual way. Some explored their heritage, personal stories, memories or recent experiences. While others represented their hopes and wishes for the future or depicted what brings them comfort or solace.

With the challenges presented throughout 2020 to 2021, many of the plate design sessions took place online. Clay kits were given to participants ahead of zoom sessions led by artists that saw kitchen tables and communal areas transformed into clay studios. It was possible to hold some of the later workshops in person, giving those taking part the chance to experience different techniques, including throwing and raku.

Each plate created makes a direct connection with the rich ceramic heritage of Stoke-on-Trent, communicating a thought, idea or representation of significance to the maker. The designs reflect a personal experience of the world, captured in a contemporary moment.

*Lead artists:*

Joanne Mills, Sarah Fraser, Alice Thatcher, Zeba Imam



*Members of the community joined from:*

ABLE

Belong Village, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Burslem Jubilee

City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College

Clay at Home online workshops

Clay Comrades

Harplands Hospital

Haywood Foundation Volunteers

Headway North Staffs

Merit Academy

North Midlands LGBT Older People's Group

North Staffs Combined Healthcare  
Early Intervention Team

RCCG Living Water Parish

Restoke Mothers - Maternal Journal

Rowan Court Care Home

Starfish Health and Wellbeing

Stoke Recovery Service

Stoke-on-Trent Adult and Community  
Learning ESOL students

The Grocott Centre

The Hub, Fenton

Visitors to Stoke-on-Trent Pride

The project was delivered in partnership with Duchess China and funded by Stoke-on-Trent City Council Community Investment Fund and Stoke Town High Street Heritage Action Zone.

The entire project is part funded by BCB and part funded by the Stoke HSHAZ project or (Stoke Town High Street Heritage Action Zone project).

Which is funded by Historic England and Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

Equipment funded by Community Investment Fund, Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

*Historic England / Historic England Midlands*

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*Stoke-on-Trent City Council*

@SoTCityCouncil

@sotcitycouncil

@sotcitycouncil

#StokeMakesPlates

#MyStokeStory



# ABLE

Sharing what make us happy while making plates together online...

I like to draw, it makes me happy

I like lorries, Eddie Stobart is my favourite

I like dancing with my fiancé, Stephen

I like eating sausage and chips at the pub

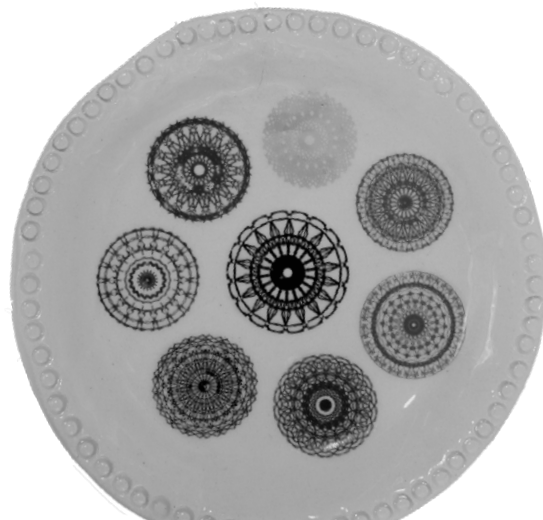
I like Atomic Kitten, my favourite band

I like drawing mandalas on my iPad,  
the rainbow colours of Pride

I like visiting Harry Potter World

I like family, friends, nature

These plates were made by participants from ABLE and Duke Street. Stoke-On-Trent City Council Adult Social Care, Health Integration and Wellbeing.





















# Belong Village, Newcastle-under-Lyme

What would you like to share with others?

At a time when we were cut off from loved ones, the residents at Belong Village, used their transfer designs to think about what they missed.

Daniel Turner, heritage coordinator for the Belong Village Heritage Gallery:

“Working with clay provides a sensory-rich experience and can have a therapeutic effect on people living with dementia; as well as building their ceramic skills, exploring the tactility of the material and transforming it into a personal artefact brings a sense of purpose and achievement for the creator.”

The porcelain used to make these plates connects with the heritage of Belong Village, built on the site of the Pomona Pottery, 18th century producers of porcelain.

“Belong residents have loved working with Joanne, sharing the ideas behind their work and getting a little bit messy with the clay. The opportunity to put their art on display, both here in the village and at the BCB festival has filled them with pride and they’re excited to share their work with the world.”



























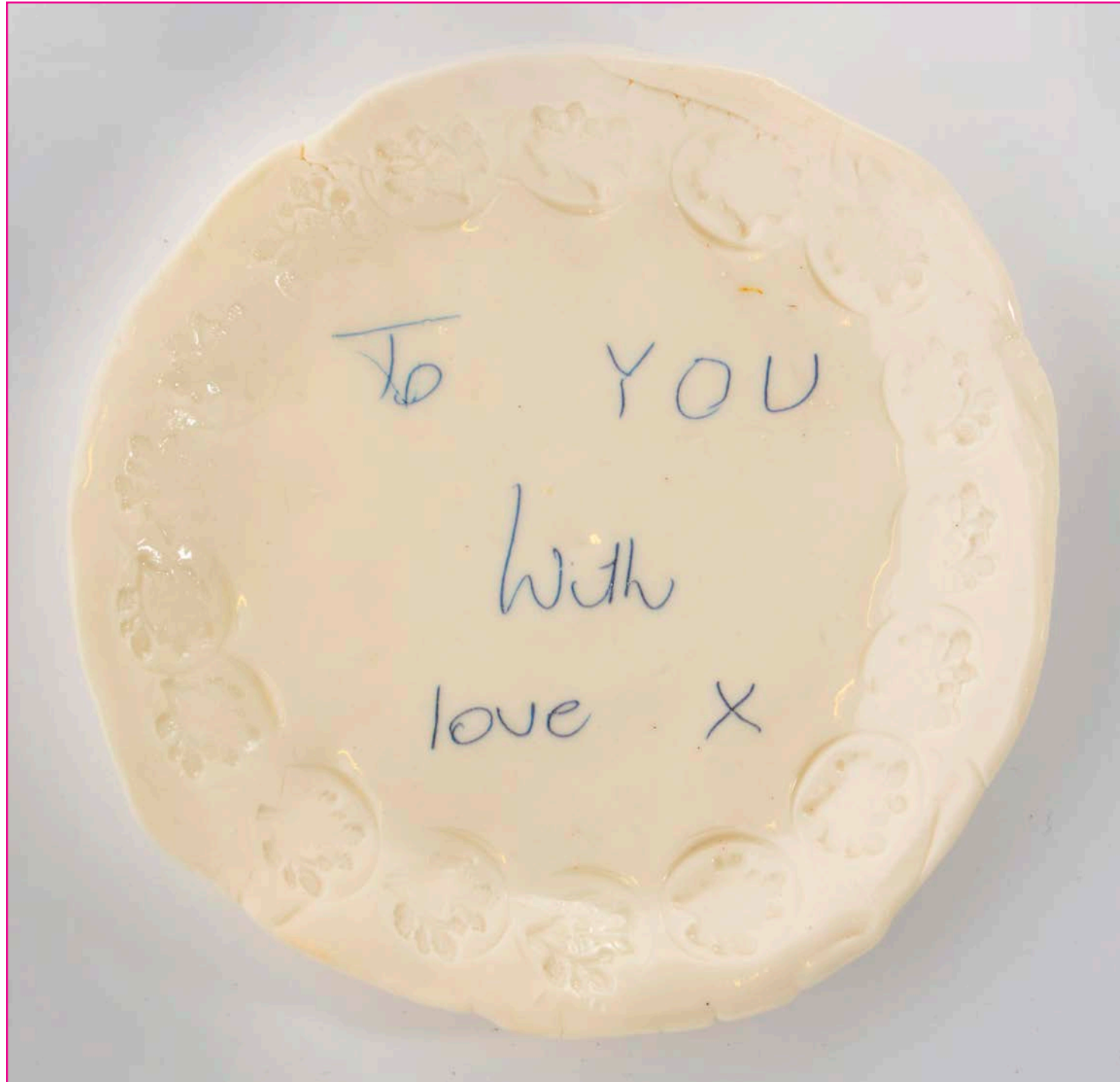






















# Burslem Jubilee

Spring; family; warmth; autumn colours; positive energy; connections; safety.

Members of Burslem Jubilee joined us for online workshops alongside health research professionals from Keele University. We talked about what makes you feel well, and members created their surface pattern design in response. The designs were created with watercolour, a medium the group had become familiar with, through workshops with artist and researcher, Natalie Illsley. They supported one another, encouraging, and translating for each other.

The Burslem Jubilee Project supports asylum seekers and refugees living in Stoke-on-Trent. They have spent the last 18 months adapting their usual ways of connecting with people to reflect the circumstances of the pandemic. The camaraderie and care for one another was clear to see, even through the computer screen.

















# City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College

'Daughter of a gilder, and always looking to find beauty in life. A starry night is an atmosphere of comfort and love, and art is all around to spread joy to others.'

'My plate was done with these designs as they represent my childhood and comfort. During the pandemic it was a type of reassurance, which brought me back to simpler and happier days, and reassured me about everything.'

'The theme was looking to the future, so I went for a tree and got carried away.'

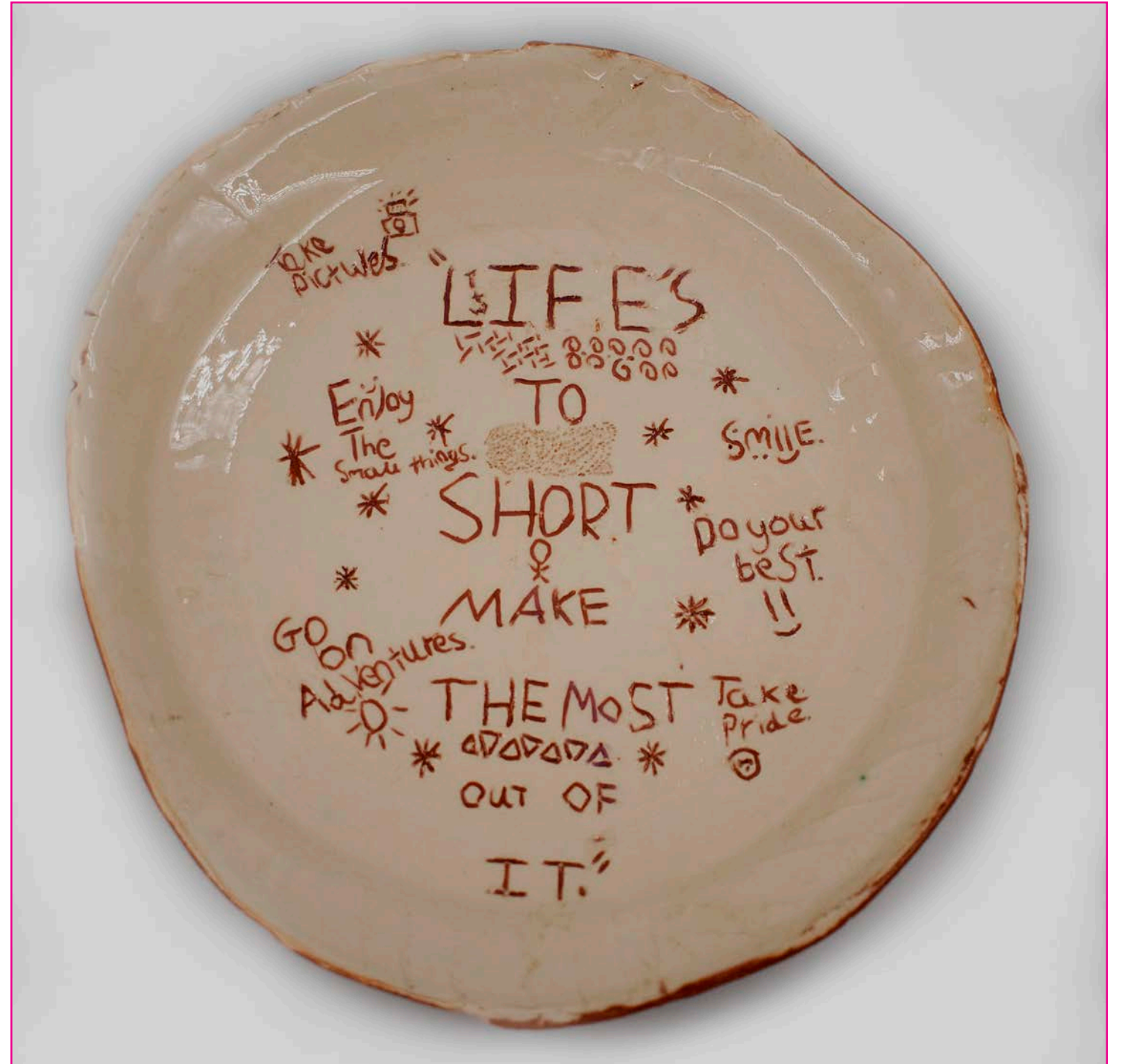
'I chose to use this pattern because it reflected and amplified any mistakes I had made in creating the plate, and turned them into something natural. This is why I designed the criss-crossing flower and bee decoration; to reflect the natural imperfections that the world knows to be beautiful.'

'To convey the message that you must enjoy life to the fullest.'

Students at Stoke 6th Form joined the extra-curricular drop-in sessions to make their plates, using the sgraffito technique.











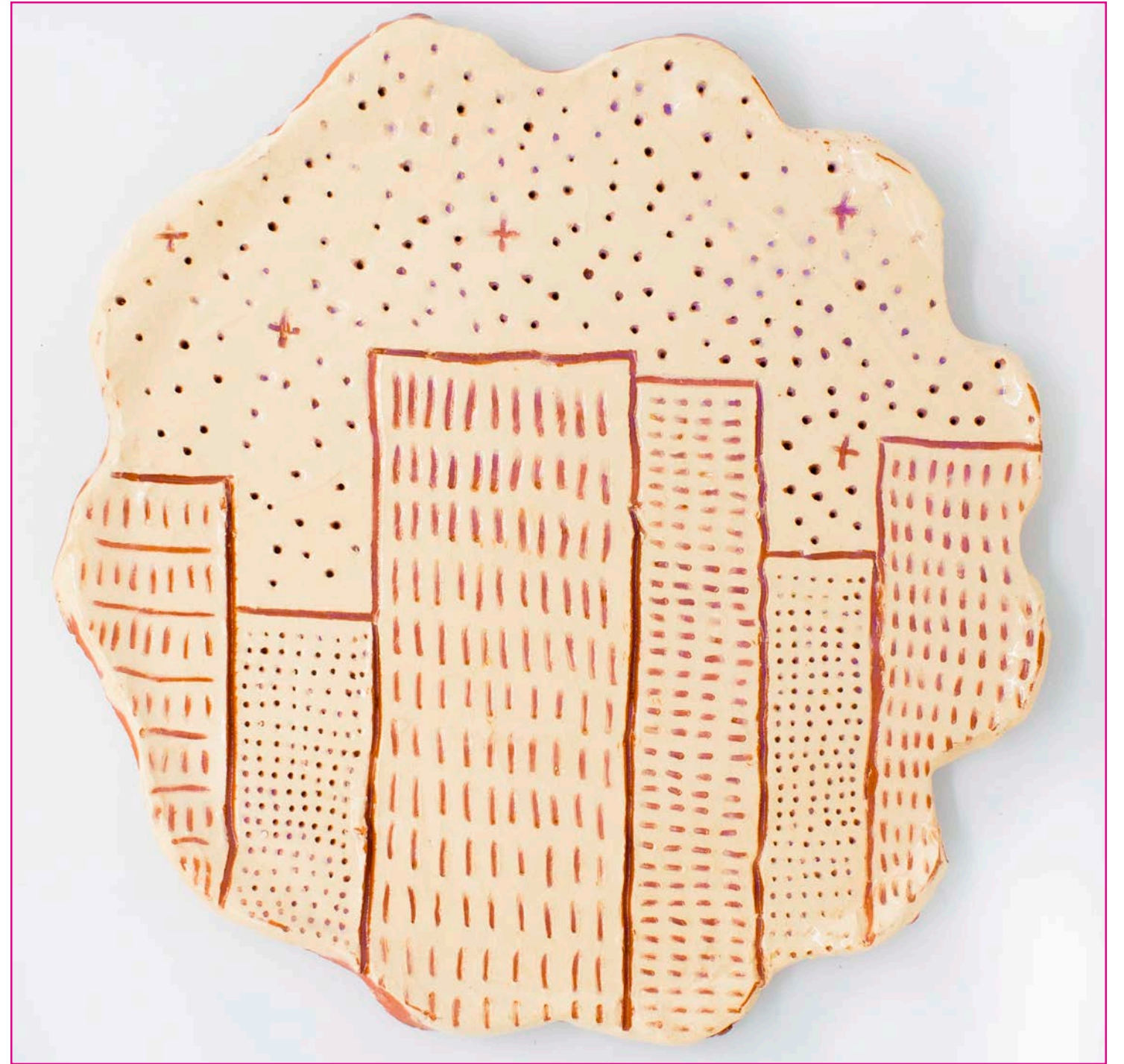






















# Clay at Home online workshops

As part of British Ceramics Biennial's 'Clay At Home' programme, Alice Thatcher and Zeba Imam delivered two online workshops to members of the public. A wide range of ages and abilities took part. Inspired by the architecture and heritage of Stoke town, they each illustrated their very own dream shop front. Participants took part from around the UK, bringing their unique responses to the brief. Some using collage, others using a variety of drawing techniques.

"I really enjoyed it, more than I thought I was going to. I liked that I could draw my idea by hand."  
- Charlotte, age 8









# Clay Comrades

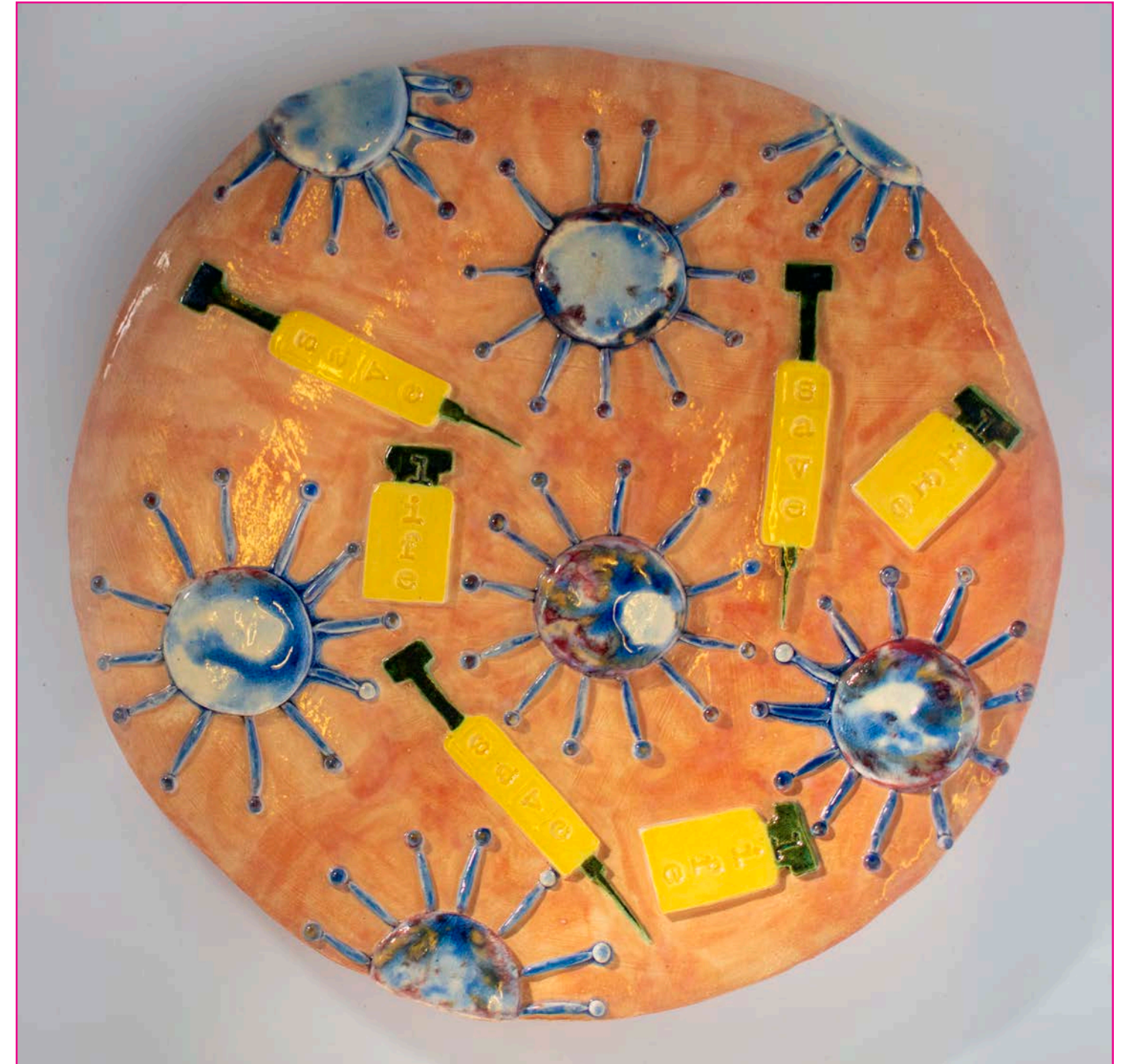
Clay Comrades are an informal collective of creative people who come together out of a shared love for clay. They use the British Ceramics Biennial studio at the historic Spode Works site.

The group has no fixed membership and there are no entry criteria. Some members have formal training in ceramics, others have learned as part of this supportive community.

During a series of unstructured online making sessions during the early part of 2021 due to Covid. The Comrades came together to make, connect, chat and support each other. Glimpsing each other's lives outside the studio whilst keeping the studio alive.

*"If it weren't for the online making session, I wouldn't have got my clay out".*

These plates were made using a variety of methods and techniques, each individual responding to the theme both at home and in the studio.



















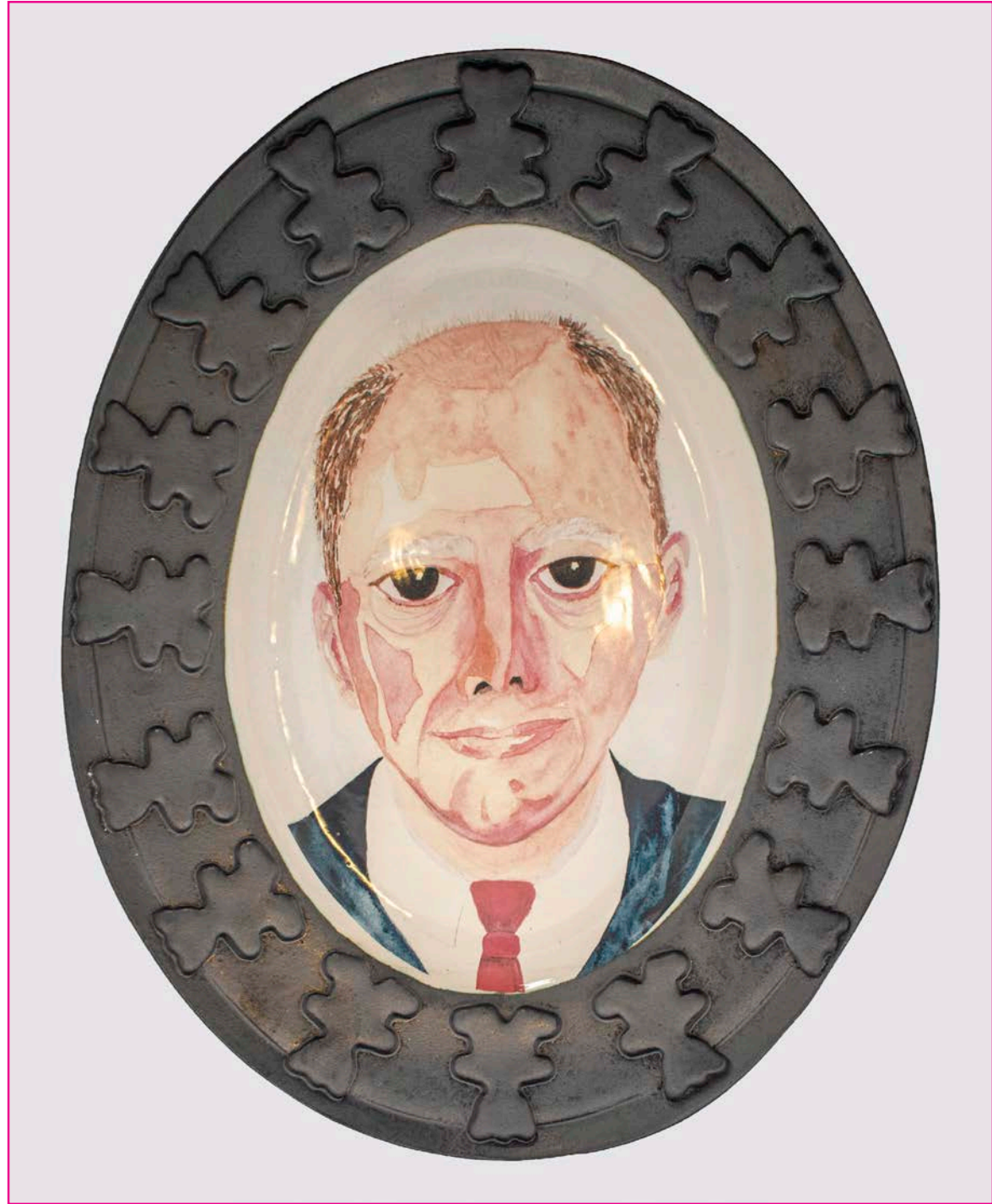




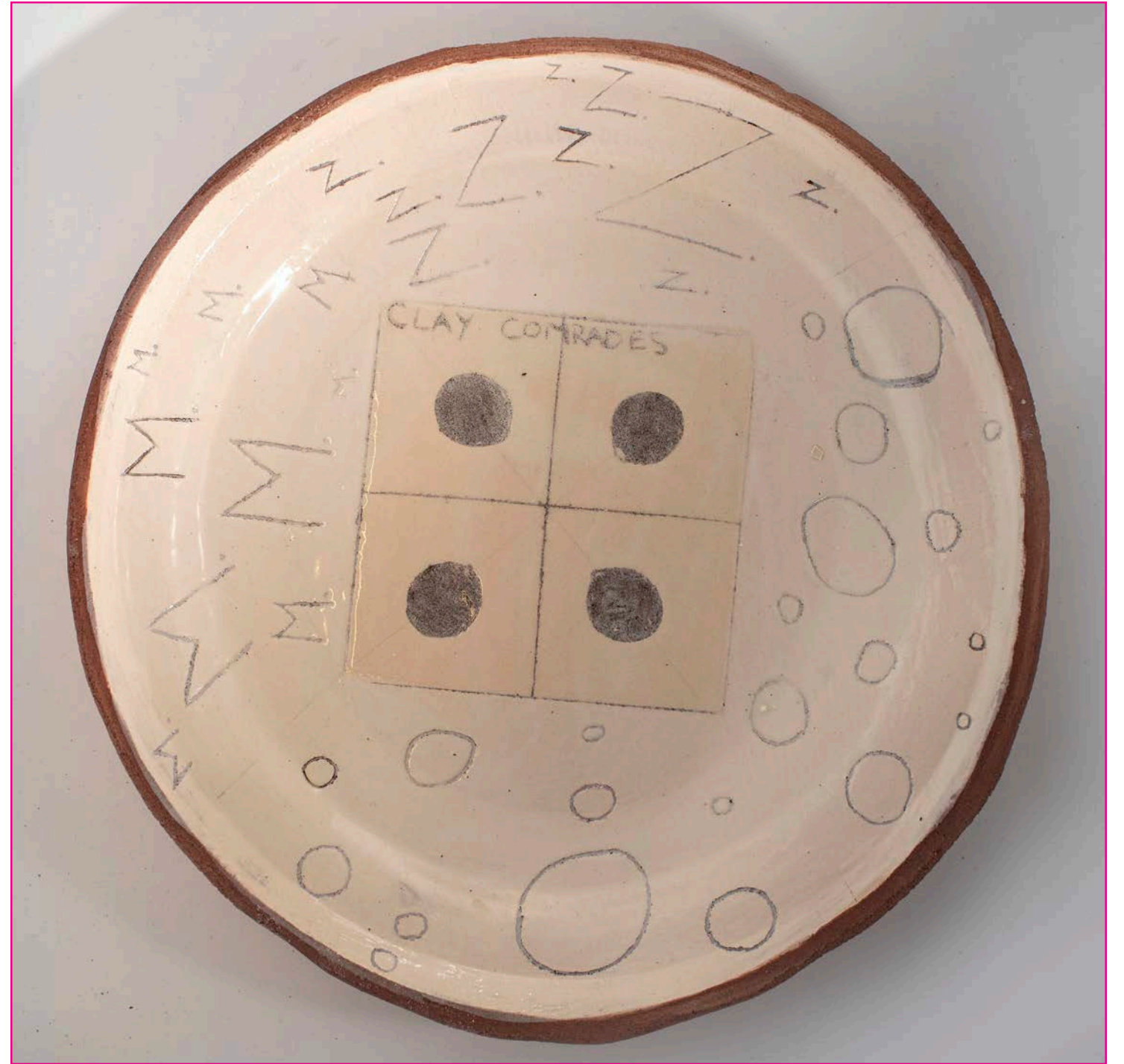




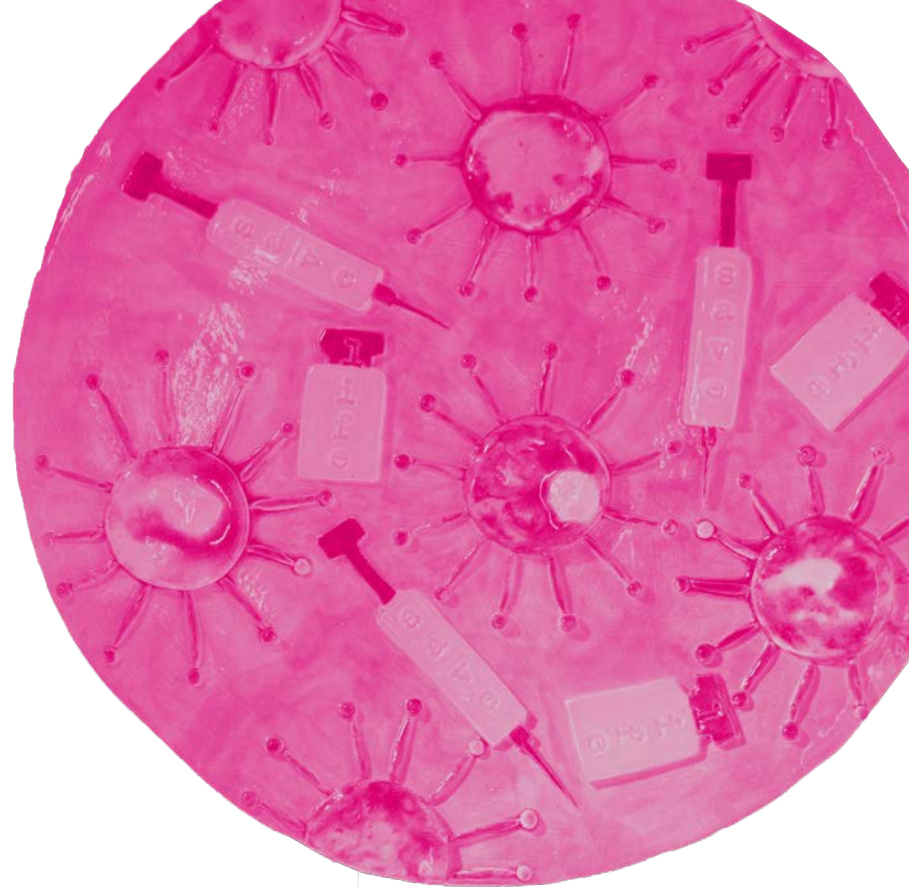














# Harplands Hospital

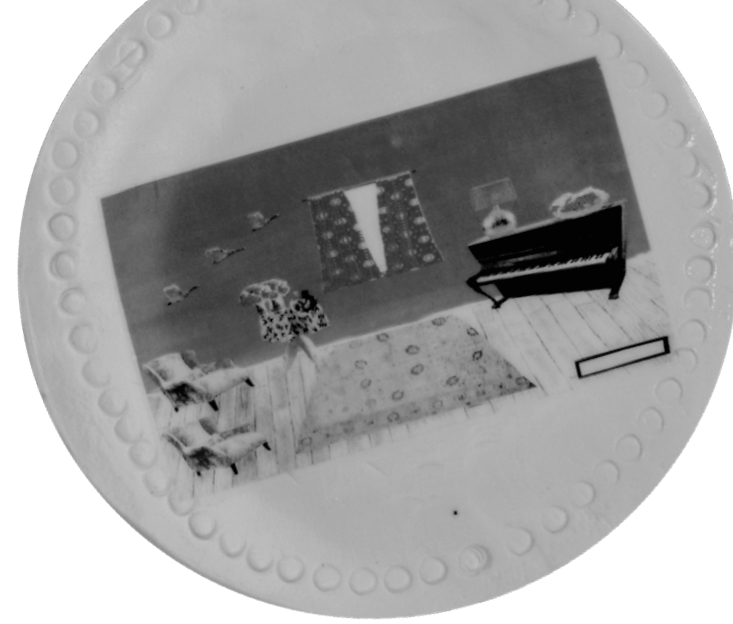
These plates were created in one to one sessions with patients on a ward at the Harplands Hospital for Older People with Complex Needs. Following an online workshop, staff member, Stevan Thompson, worked with individuals to make a plate and also explore their memory of home through collage. Stevan explained that recalling and describing aspects of home was a source of comfort for some of the patients. They regularly use creativity to explore their thoughts and feelings. The plate featuring the Royal Family wearing gloves, was part of a display created within the hospital to try and find humour in all the additional PPE that became necessary during the pandemic.













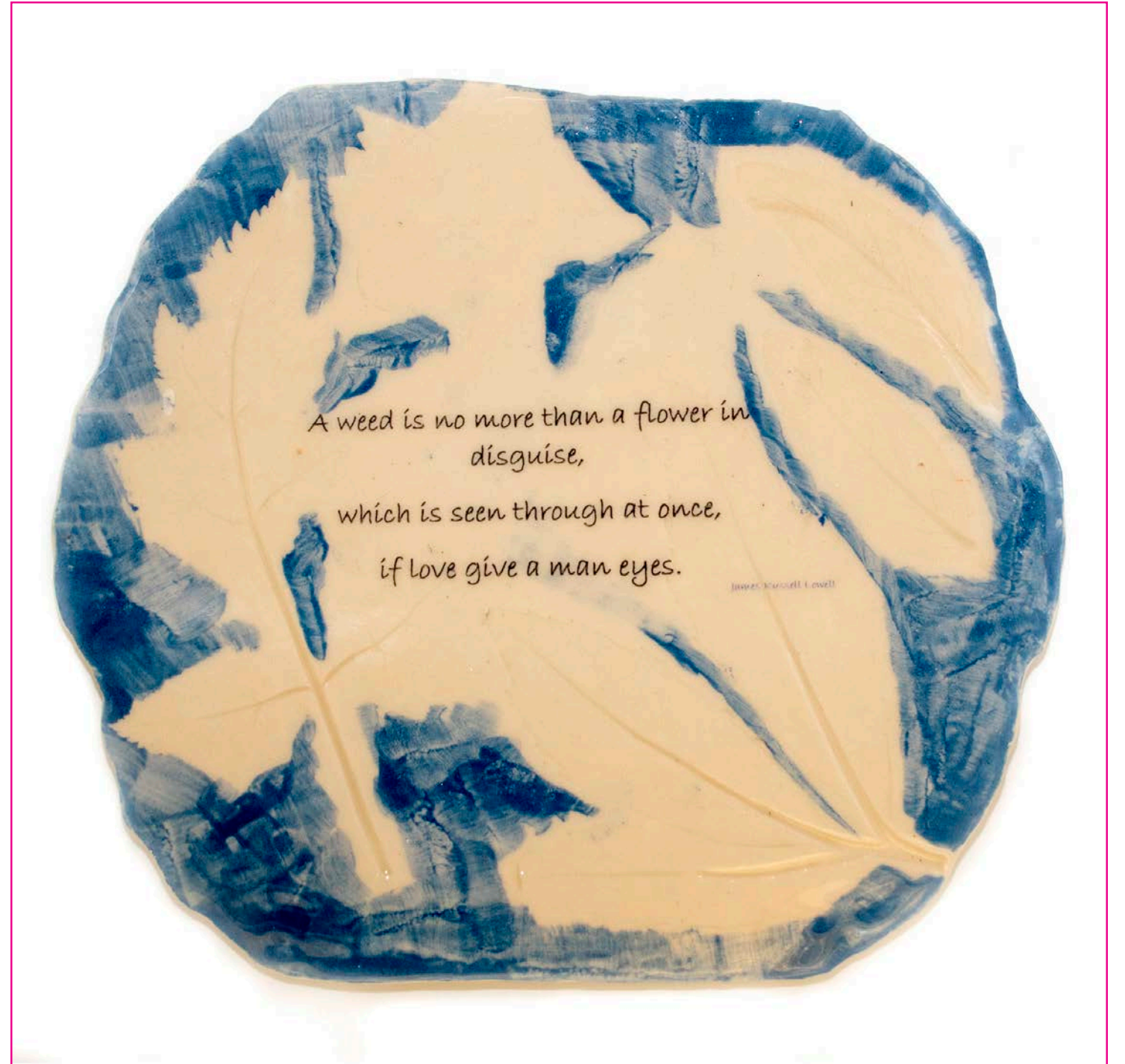
# Haywood Foundation Volunteers

June Brammar and her team of volunteers run the Patient Information Education Resource centre at the Haywood Hospital. With the pandemic limiting access to the hospital, the volunteers were looking for ways to connect online.

The volunteers are experts at communicating with others, so this creative activity gave them a chance to keep those skills sharp. They drew upon their own experiences of 2020/21 to create their designs, exploring what has been important to them. A shared appreciation of nature and local heritage emerged from their conversations.







A weed is no more than a flower in  
disguise,  
which is seen through at once,  
if love give a man eyes.

James Russell Lowell







# Headway North Staffs

## Where do you find solace?

Recovering from head injury or living through a global pandemic, the group had a lot of experience to inspire their plate designs. Some are hand-drawn, others collected or collaged. Games, music, family and wildlife were amongst the sources of comfort.

The workshops at Headway were some of the first that were able to take place in-person, at their centre in Cobridge. The workshops were offered as part of a busy itinerary of activities at the centre. There was a great atmosphere as members chatted, laughed and competed against one another in their regular quiz competitions.

























# Merit Academy

There was a buzz among the students of Merit PRU as we arrived with stacks of pizza boxes. Their contents: clay, rolling pins, and slip surprised but didn't disappoint.

Thwacking, tapping, rolling, pressing, painting.

They made plates with unique shapes depicting characters real and imagined. Friendships, football, and fantasy. Details added with heritage decals.



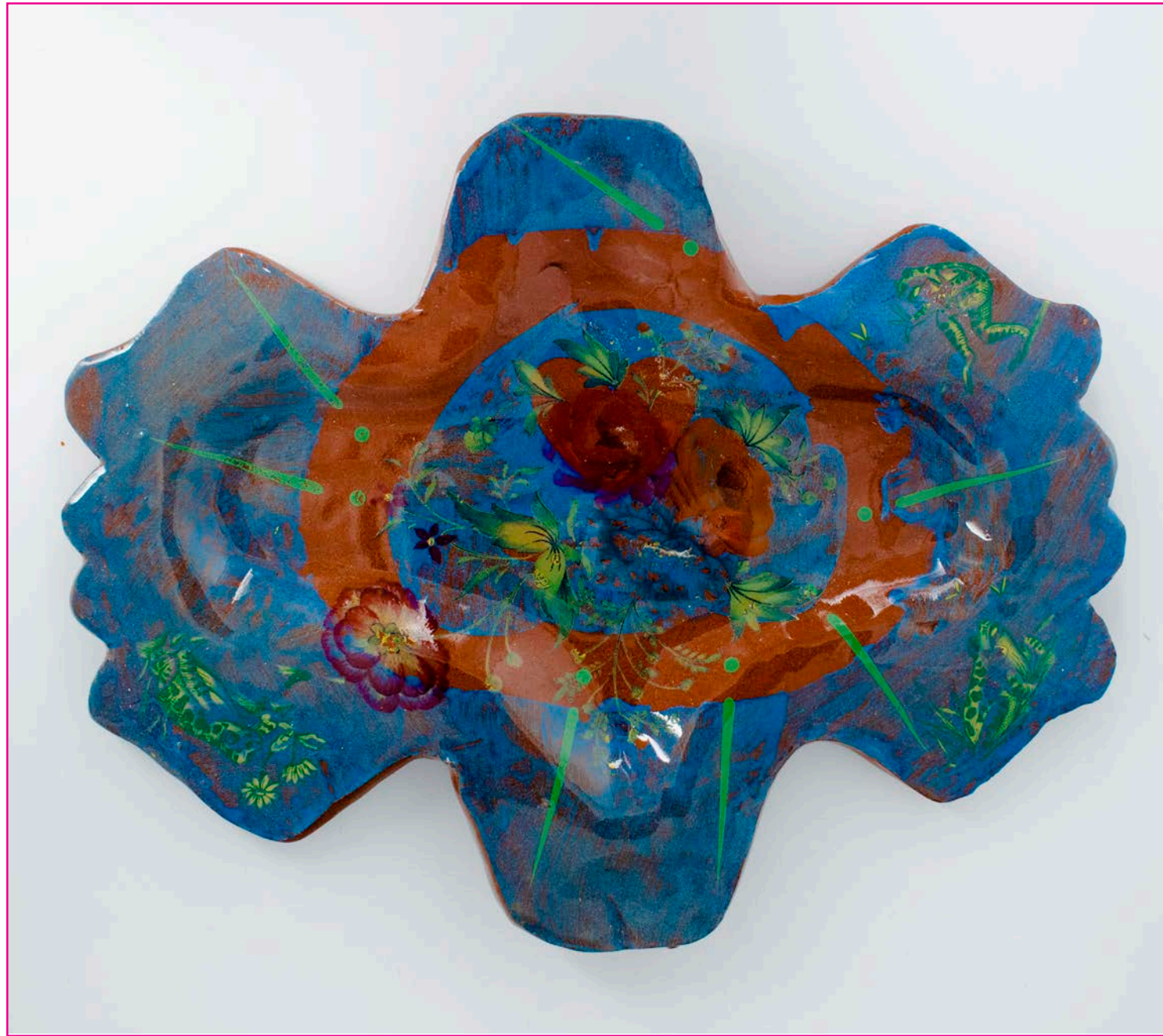
Cut it out, dip it in the water and then peel away the paper like a temporary tattoo.

*“there was a lovely vibe in the school”*

Merit is a short stay school (PRU) for children with medical and mental health needs. The school offers a safe, secure, and nurturing environment for all its students.



















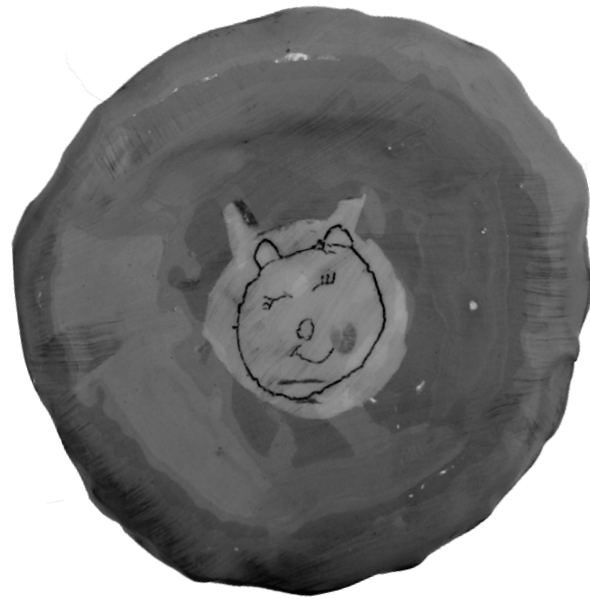














# North Midlands LGBT Older People's Group



'During lockdown, the quiet streets have been filled with memories... that what we lose becomes defined by empty spaces... The end of life but not of love'

Members and friends of North Staffordshire LGBT group for Older People, explored their personal experiences, memories and expressions of the past year during a series of online workshops

These plates were made to:

'Celebrate life and love wherever they are found'

'Meeting my partner in 1998'

'Mark the history of the group founded in 2009'

'Note recent progress in LGBT history'

'Show solidarity with people groups and traditions of Stoke, a city I have chosen to make my home.'

'Commemorate the memory of my NHS colleagues who lost their lives from Covid 19 RIP.'

'The heartbreak of not being able to share meals with friends'

'Engage in something creative'













# North Staffs Combined Healthcare Early Intervention Team

Stoke-on-Trent...

the bottle kilns, the old factory sites,  
the Potteries museum with its engines  
being out in nature  
cycling with my dad down the canal  
the roaring chorus of Stoke City fans.

These plates were made online with a small  
group from the Early Intervention Team with  
"brave hope and mindful togetherness".

The North Staffs Combined Healthcare  
Early Intervention Team serves people  
with early Psychosis who are aged 14-64  
and their families. The programme bridges  
youth and adult mental health services, and  
links community with hospital in the North  
Staffordshire and Staffordshire Moorlands area.













# RCCG Living Water Parish

These plates were made by members of the Redeem Christian Church of God, Living Water parish. With their messages of hope, love, and happiness.

A group of children and adults from the parish in Stoke-on-Trent, shared their messages and commemorated important people and events on plates created during a face-to-face workshop in July 2021.

"After what we have been through  
- the pandemic, there is hope"

"It's for the family"

"My sister and I against the universe"

"Love wins"





















# Restoke Mothers - Maternal Journal

'How beautiful it was and so fitting to talk about "what was on our plate" within the session.'

'I made this plate in a very hot kitchen. It is called 'The Last Feed,' for my beautiful little girl, made during a global pandemic.'

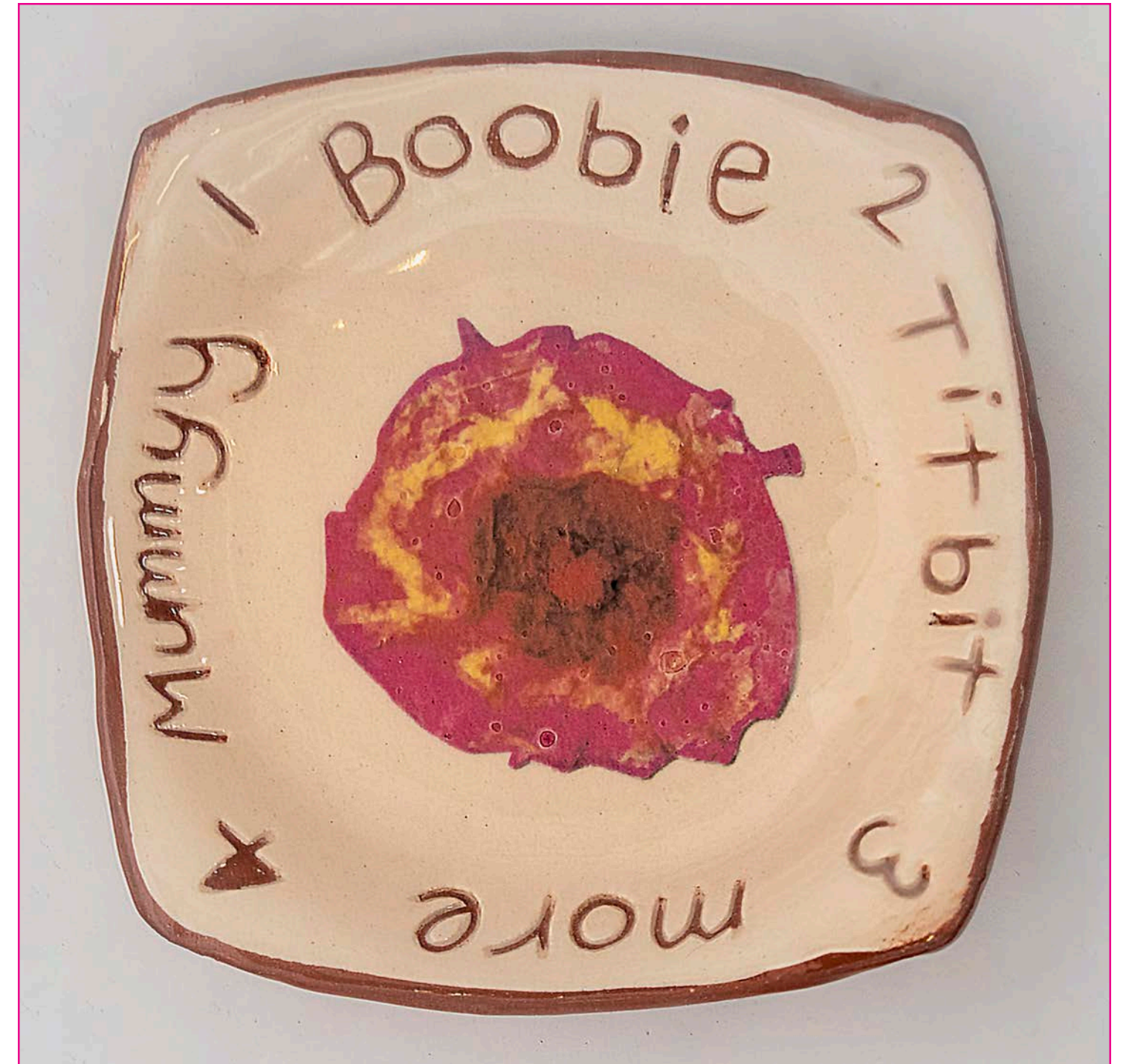
'As a group we were able to chat, share experiences and be creative at the same time. It was a good way of winding down from busy, chaotic, stressful situations, especially in this pandemic time.'

'The smallest is a nod to the maternal journal group - we often spoke of tits, boobs, boobies, chests, bras, breastfeeding, etc.'

'I hope nature will continue to grow strong; that my children and the memory of my children will continue to grow; and that we continue to recognise the connection between each other and nature.'

'I thought I had a lot on my plate, I did, and it was such a beautiful plate.'

In February 2021 Restoke started running Maternal Journal sessions. These sessions are informal, relaxed and offer a non-judgemental place to connect with other mothers. The plate-making sessions formed part of these regular, online sessions.





















# Rowan Court Care Home



'I chose this design because I used to work as a cook and I loved it.'

'I love daffodils and I'm looking forward to better days.'

'Things I've missed doing while COVID 19 has been on.'

'Forget me not! We won't forget who we lost and how hard we worked through the last year.'

Residents and staff at Rowan Court joined weekly zoom sessions to make their plates. They passed on the techniques they learnt to other residents who wanted to join the project. They chose things to depict in their designs that they wanted to commemorate or remember.















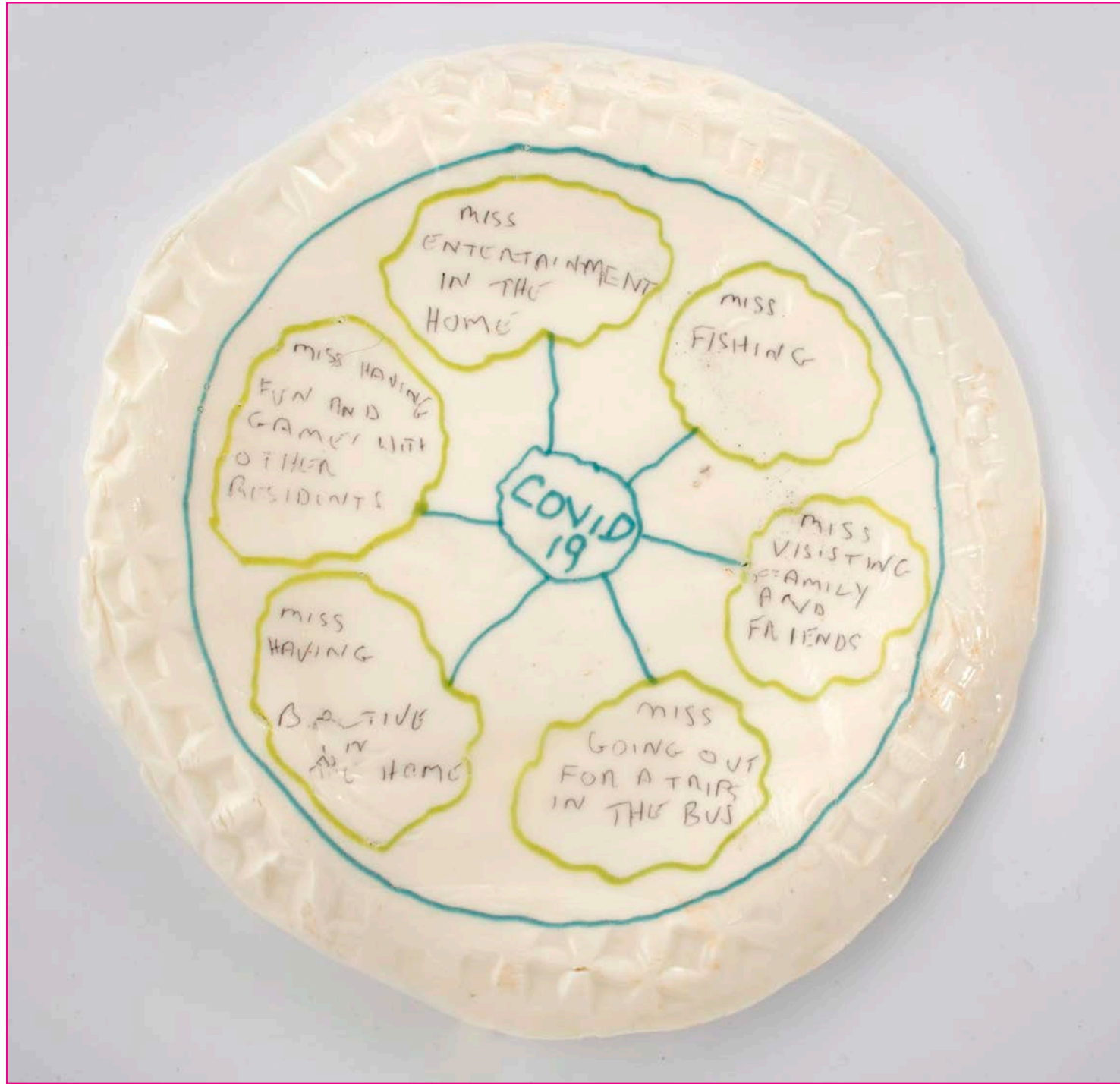














# Starfish Health and Wellbeing



Making Spaces  
making together at home not alone  
it is good

- to see everyone
- to see new friends
- to be doing something you

remember from the studio doing something new  
enjoying the plate sketching clay stretching  
rolling scoring building coiling pinching drawing  
laughing relaxing

It's tactile therapeutic mindful  
relaxing

proud and focussed

making plates, telling our stories mute unmute

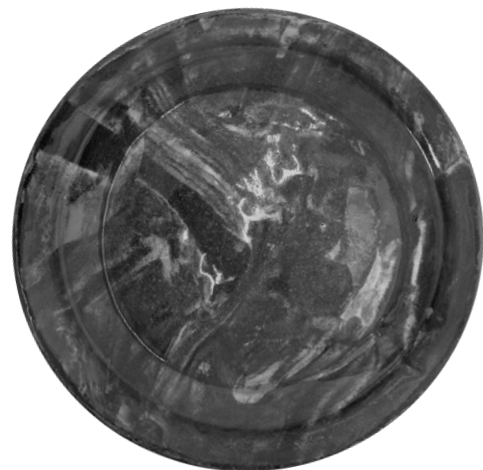
video on

pop snap crackle

the clay dissolves

we use it again.

Making spaces online together  
at home.

























# Stoke Recovery Service

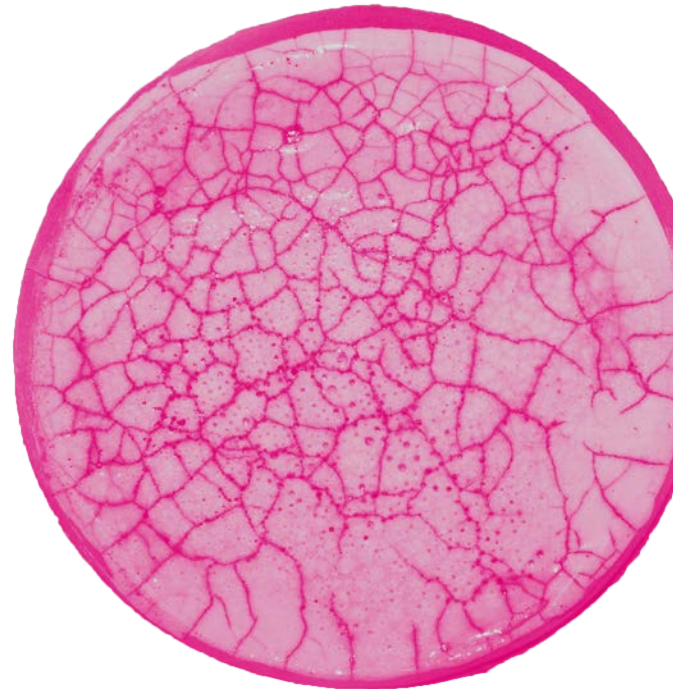
Following a 12 week creative recovery programme, delivered by British Ceramics Biennial and Stoke Recovery Service, the group were invited to attend a 4 day residency at the BCB studio at Spode.

The theme of the residency was 'Not Knowing.' The group used a variety of techniques to create plates that were destined for the unpredictable process of raku firing. They created an extraordinary variety of plate-like forms, using the potters' wheel and handbuilding techniques.

Poet and writer, Anjum Malik, joined the group to reflect on the process of making and recovery through spoken and written words. She has taken these words and created poems from them, shared here.

The residency experience built upon existing connections made between creativity, clay and recovery. The move to the studio and the chance to work alongside one another, brought additional benefits to the group.

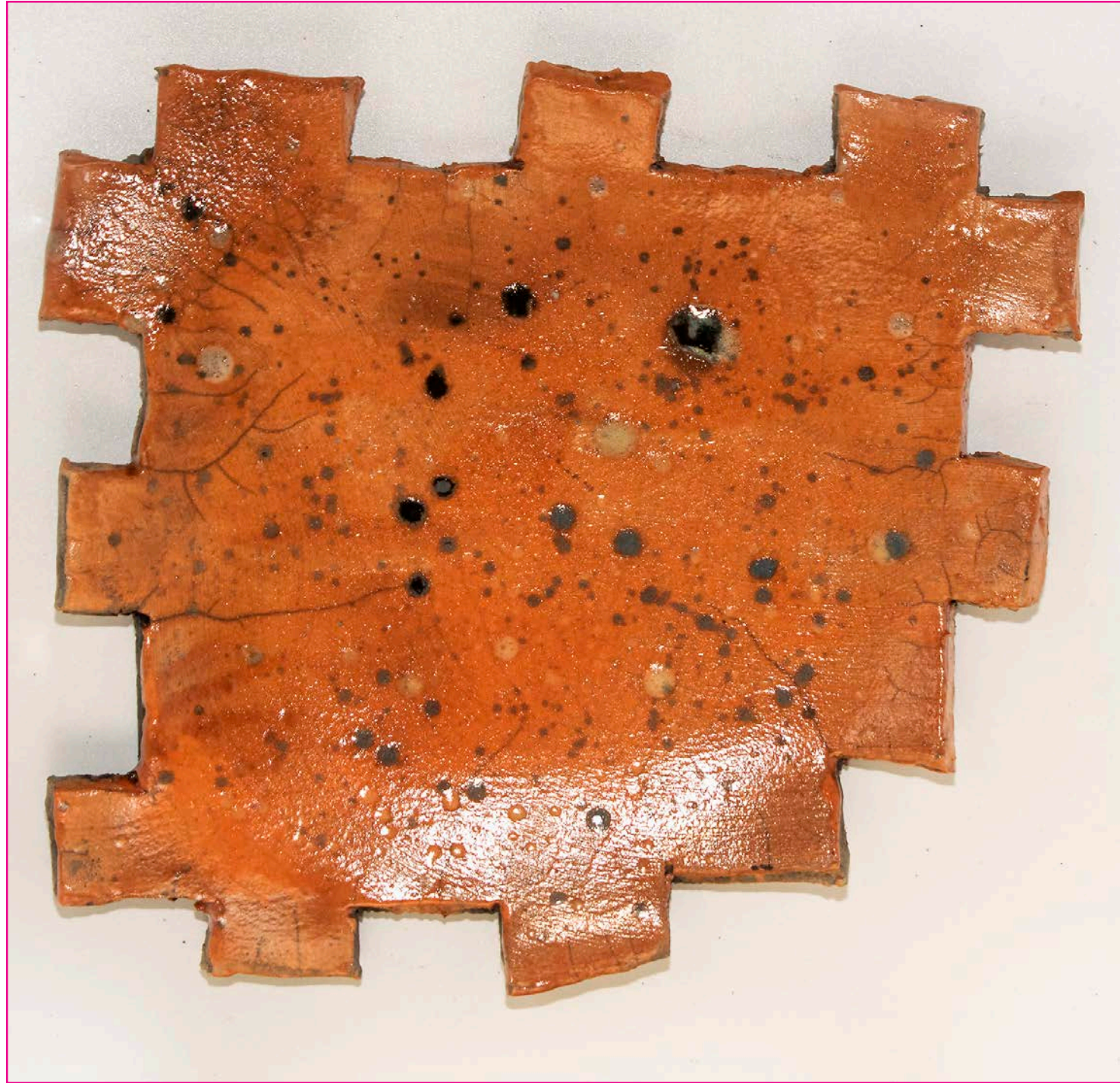
*'I've never felt so comfortable working with others. Everyone was so nice to each other and I felt really welcomed.'*



















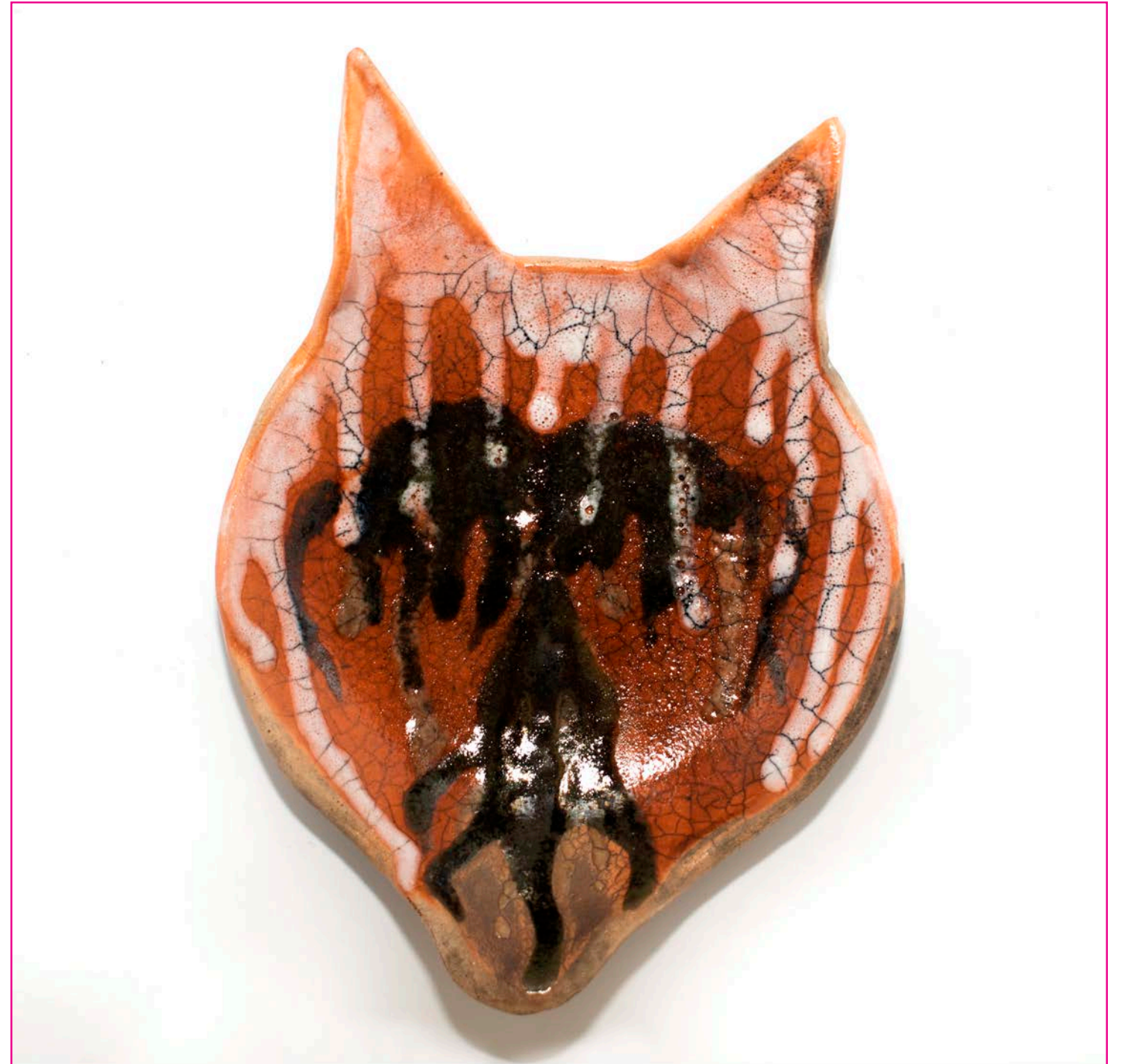












































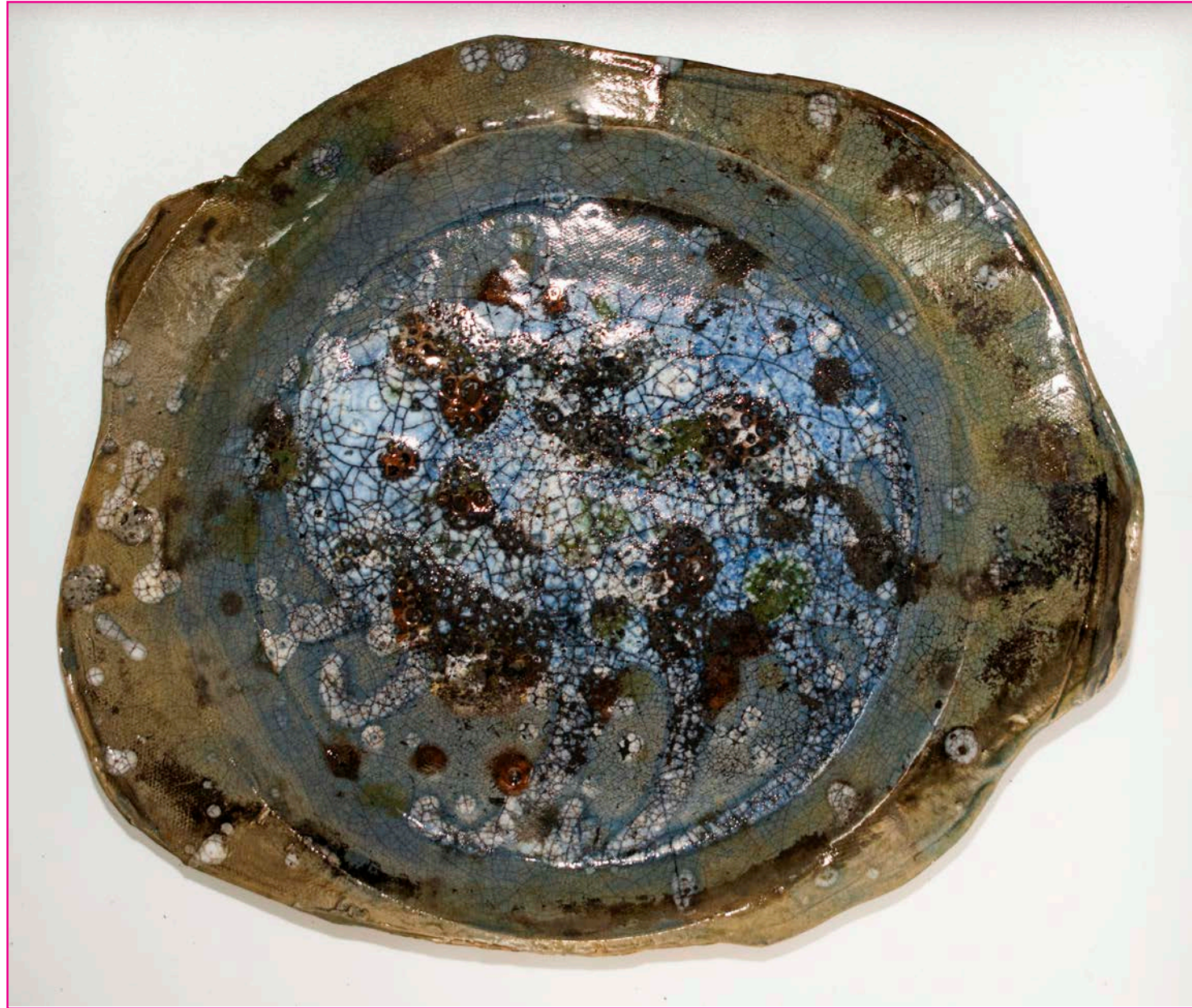


















# Stoke-on-Trent Adult and Community Learning ESOL students

We invited women who have just begun to learn English and are living in Stoke-on-Trent, to join us to create plates and work with poet and writer, Anjum Malik. This intimate group of women shared fascinating stories of their lives here and in other countries. Family and food were recurring themes and laughter filled the studio during their visits.









# The Grocott Centre

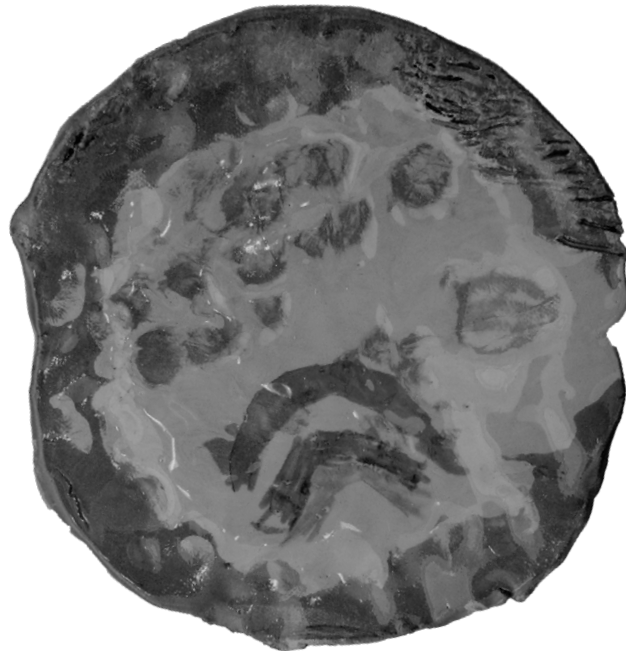
The clay sessions took place as members were beginning to meet in-person again at the Grocott Centre. Some had been a little nervous to leave home, so it was wonderful to see them sharing ideas, laughing and making together.

'The reason why I have chosen this picture is because flowers are my favourite thing.'

'Because I miss the club.'

'Our centre is situated at the Community Hub in Blurton, Stoke-On-Trent.'

We work with people who have a wide range of support needs including; physical and or learning disabilities, mental health needs, illness and allied conditions ranging from short term support to enable people to regain their independence, on-going support to enable people to maintain their health and well-being, to intensive support to enable people with complex needs to enjoy an active and fulfilling life.













# The Hub, Fenton

The Hub Fenton is a community venue which provides services for all age groups and abilities. It offers a range of activities including cooking, gentle exercise, crafts and gardening.

*“We are very proud of our achievements, particularly bringing people together creatively. Whether this be face to face or digitally during the pandemic.”*

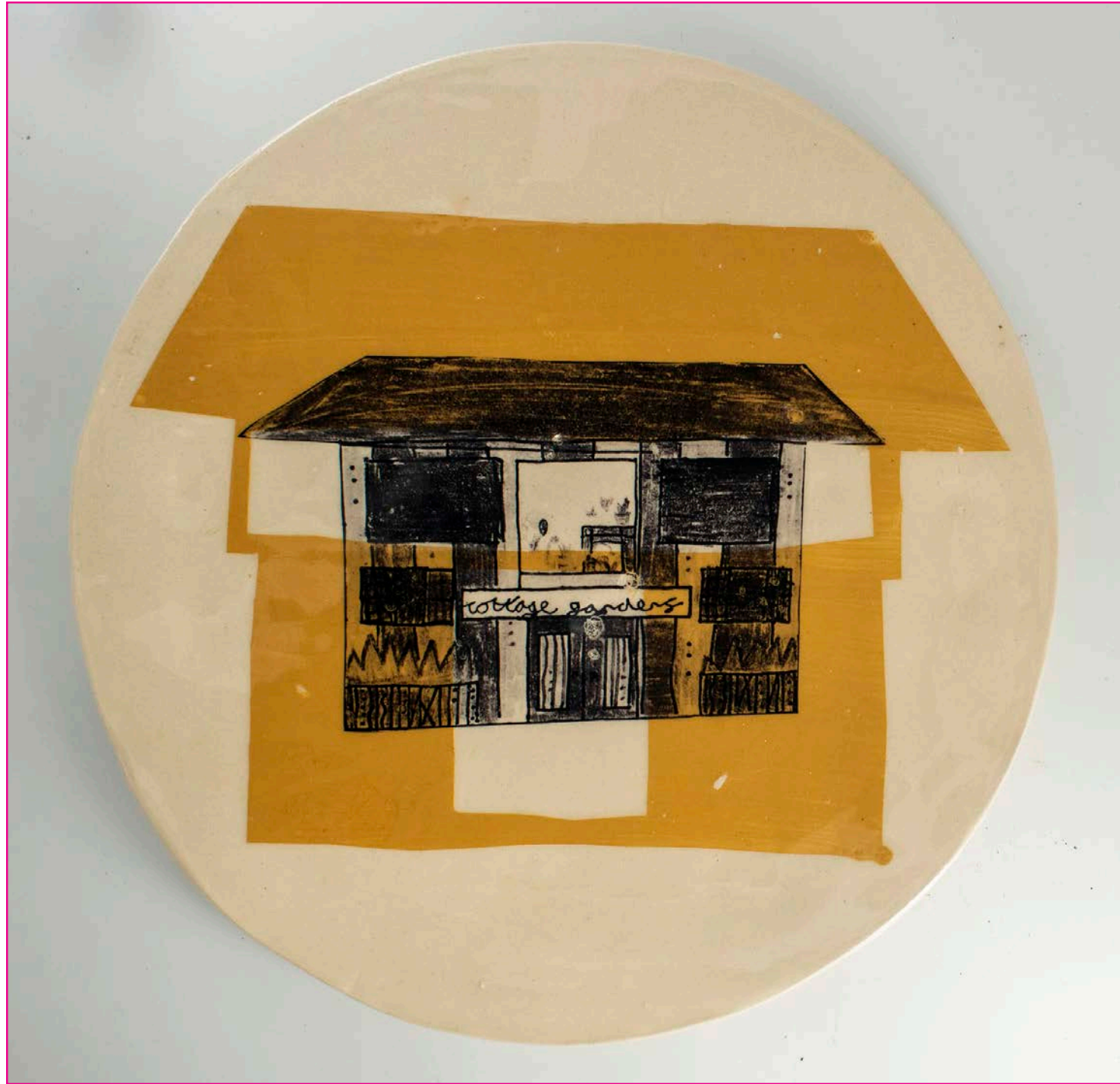
The group took part in three online workshops with artists Alice Thatcher and Zeba Imam. They took inspiration from the architecture of Stoke town. They talked about ideas of their dream shops. They then created their very own plate using clay. They brought their shops front dreams to life by working through mixed media.



*“Advertising for the plates project has been great for recruiting new members. We’ve had interest from people in the neighbourhood who have not previously attended the centre. Clay has been one of the group’s favourite materials to work with, we are very excited about the prospect of having our work exhibited at the festival”*  
- Carole Kind, The Hub Manager.





















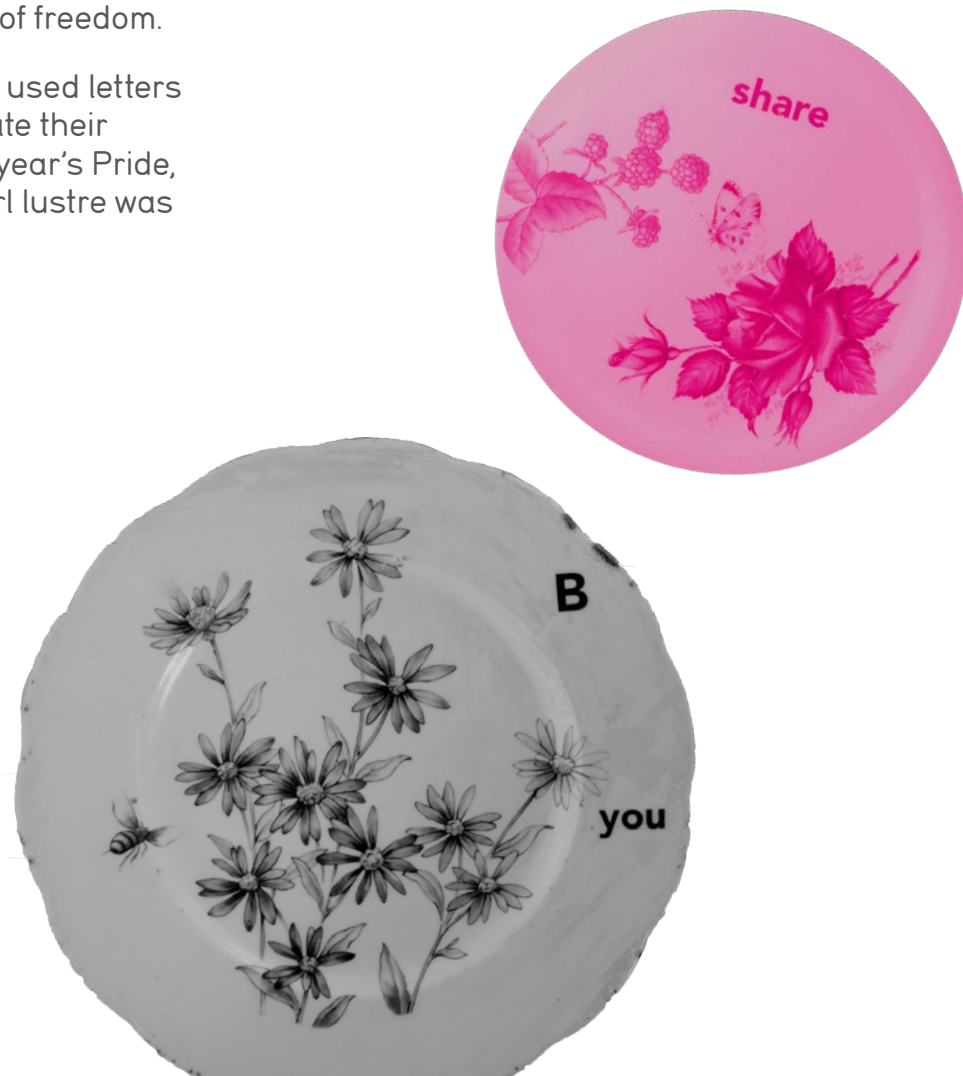




# Visitors to Stoke-on-Trent Pride

Over the course of an afternoon, visitors to Stoke-on-Trent Pride were invited to decorate vintage plates with transfers and lustre. From aged 4 to 70 and beyond, we were joined by lots of makers - keen to express ideas of freedom.

Freedom to.... freedom from.... They used letters and old lithograph patterns to create their designs. The colour theme for this year's Pride, was iridescence, so mother-of-pearl lustre was used to create this effect.



















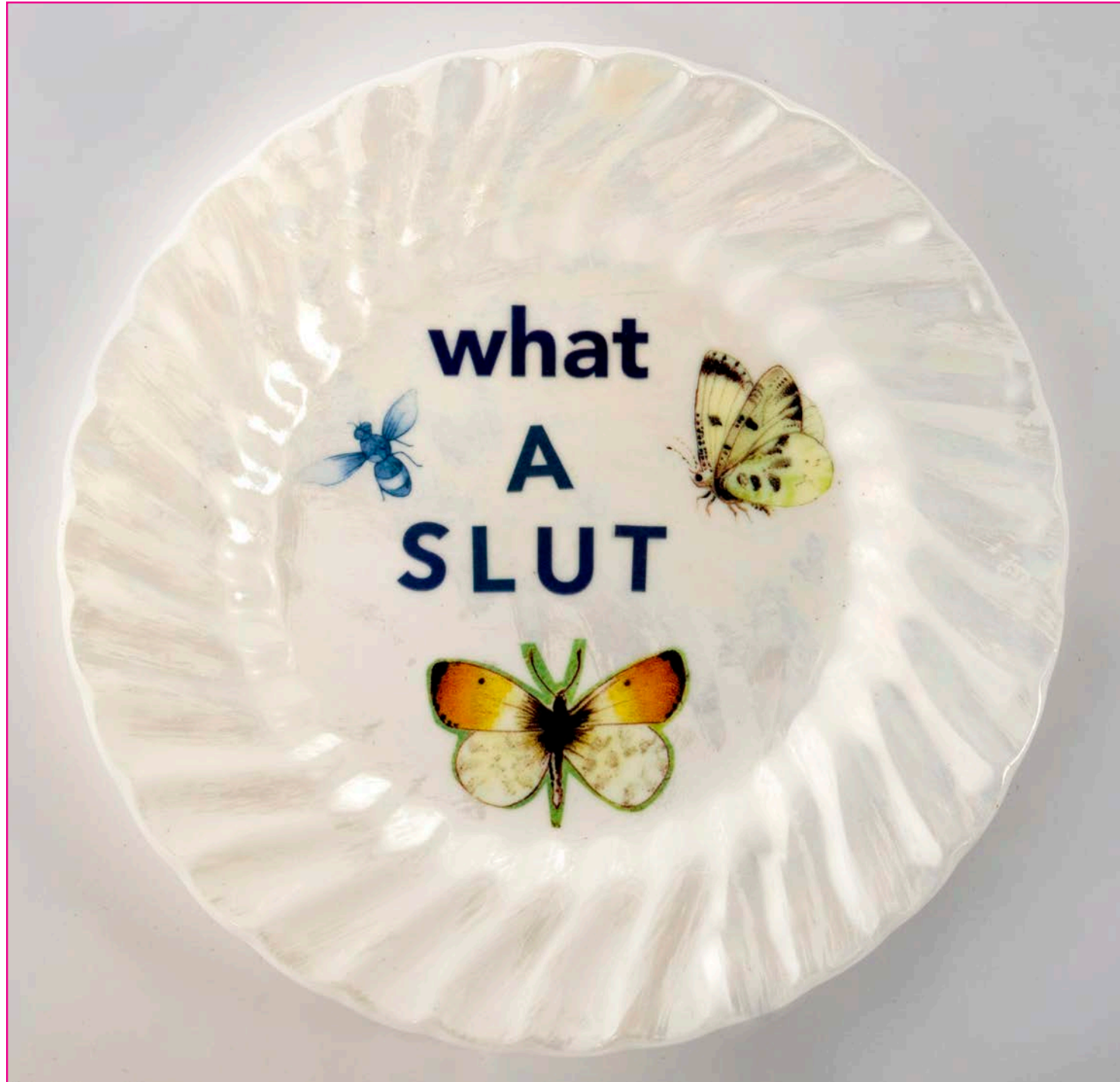








































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[britishceramicsbiennial.com](http://britishceramicsbiennial.com)