**For immediate release: 11 May 2021**

**Stoke makes plates for 2021 British Ceramics Biennial**

A wall of 250 plates designed by Stoke-on-Trent residents will take centre stage at the British Ceramics Biennial (BCB), which returns to the original Spode factory site in Stoke Town from 11 September to 17 October.

Over the past few months, 120 people from all over the city – including groups from local care homes, addiction recovery groups and the Jubilee Club, which supports refugees and asylum seekers - have been designing their own plates inspired by Stoke’s historic high street, taking part in workshops exploring the city’s past, present and future. Their finished plates will be part of the **Stoke Makes Plates** exhibition in the Spode China Hall, which is the hub of the BCB festival.

The British Ceramics Biennial is a festival of exhibitions and hands-on events that celebrate the life, character and creativity that ceramics bring to the city. The 2021 festival will see the original Spode factory site in the heart of Stoke Town transformed and animated by the UK’s leading ceramic artists and emerging talents, many of them taking inspiration from the city’s industrial heritage and creating work with people living in the city. For the first time BCB will also have an online programme of films, tours and events for those unable to visit in person.

Other festival highlights include:

* Major exhibitions in the city’s cultural quarter of Hanley including **Neil Brownsword’s** solo show at the **Potteries Museum & Art Gallery**, which delves into North Staffordshire’s early ceramic industrialisation, and an exhibition at **Airspace Gallery** exploring clay’s zeitgeist moment.
* A design for a **Fern Brick** for growing shade-loving plants in **Portland Street**, created by BCB artists Joanne Mills and Sarah Fraser in collaboration with Portland Inn artist Anna Francis. The Fern Bricks and **Portland Inn Pigeons** - ridge tiles made by Portland Street residents and adorned with decorative pigeons - will be sold in a pop-up shop on Piccadilly Street run by people who aren’t currently in employment or education.
* Paintings and drawings by local artist Louise Adams inspired by the Spode Rose Garden and public realm seating across the Spode Works site created by Stoke-based Dust Rising.
* Artist **Paul Scott’s** new *Cumbrian Blue(s)* tea set made by Spode for Fortnum & Mason and on show in the The Spode Museum Trust & Heritage Centre.
* Interventions in the China Hall inspired by the **Wedgwood anti-slavery medallion** and led by local young people in collaboration with V&A Wedgwood Collection
* A vibrant, hands-on programme of activities will run throughout the festival – from plate-making to science experiments - encouraging people of all ages to be inspired to create ceramics for themselves. The launch weekend (11 and 12 September) will bring together a programme of celebratory activities for all ages.

Iain Cartwright, Executive Director of the British Ceramics Biennial comments: ‘*We’re really excited to be back with such a vibrant festival programme. As well as bringing life back to the city, the festival will be a chance to show how contemporary artists are using clay to create very contemporary, thought-provoking and often politically charged work, many of them taking inspiration from Stoke-on-Trent’s extraordinary industrial heritage. This year’s festival is about supporting the artists and communities we work with and welcoming visitors back to the city.’*

The seventh edition of the BCB festival is in Stoke-on-Trent from 11 September to 17 October 2021. The festival is underpinned by a year-round programme of artists’ commissions, education and community engagement projects throughout the city.

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

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**Notes to editors**

**About the** **British Ceramics Biennial:**

The British Ceramics Biennial festival takes places from 11 September to 17 October 2021.

The British Ceramics Biennial (BCB) is a prestigious and high-profile festival of contemporary ceramics that takes place in Stoke-on-Trent. BCB presents artworks from the UK’s leading ceramicists alongside work by international artists, in exhibitions and special events held across the city. BCB is underpinned by an exciting year-round programme of artists’ commissions, education and community engagement projects.

British Ceramics Biennial is a prestigious project that embraces the heritage of the Potteries as the home of British ceramics; that stimulates creativity and innovation across the breadth of its practice and sharpens Stoke-on-Trent’s creative edge as an international centre for excellence in contemporary ceramics.

Initiated in 2009, BCB has grown to be the single largest ceramics event in the UK, a flagship cultural project for Stoke-on-Trent City Council, and a catalyst for regeneration. BCB has been successful in bringing great art, creative energy and critical attention to the city, and has facilitated meaningful new public engagement with local communities, visitors and cultural tourists.

**British Ceramics Biennial funders:**

The British Ceramics Biennial is funded by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and is supported using public funding by Arts Council England.

