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British Ceramics Biennial to receive National Portfolio Organisation funding from Arts Council England



British Ceramics Biennial 2021, Credit Jenny Harper

The British Ceramics Biennial (BCB) is delighted to announce that it will remain in receipt of National Portfolio Organisation funding from Arts Council England for the next three years. Since 2009, British Ceramics Biennial has worked from its base in Stoke-on-Trent to deliver an engaging year-round programme of artists' commissions, education, and community projects, all of which feed into a national festival of contemporary ceramics - the single largest contemporary ceramics event in the UK.

The additional funds of £930,000 over 2023 – 2026 mean that BCB can grow both its year-round programme and its festival programme for 2023 and 2025, as well as continue cultural leadership work through support of other organisations and artists. New initiatives include the introduction of BCB's largest yet artist commissioning scheme and a programme to support young people to develop their transferable communication skills through working with clay.

Alison Wedgwood, Chair of Trustees for the British Ceramics Biennial responded to the decision by saying "*This is a great achievement for BCB, and I extend my congratulations to the BCB staff, volunteers and my fellow Board members. It is a privilege to see BCB expand its support for*

contemporary artists and engage thousands of people each year in the social, creative and health benefits of working with clay. This funding, alongside the continued support of Staffordshire University; our many project funders, including National Lottery Heritage Fund, the NHS, The Rayne Foundation and Children in Need; and Stoke-on-Trent City Council provides the stability needed to make even greater change through clay. We extend our sincere thanks to Arts Council England for the support."

Arts Council England received a record-breaking 1,730 applications for its 2023-2026 investment programme - more than double the number of National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) it currently funds. The British Ceramics Biennial is absolutely committed to its mission of developing, sustaining and expanding innovative ceramics practice and improving lives together with artists and creative communities as a National Portfolio Organisation aligned with *Let's Create*, Arts Council England's strategy for 2020-30.

Clare Wood, Artistic Director and Chief Executive of the British Ceramics Biennial speaking about the funding announcement said: *"BCB is an incredible organisation due to its breadth, engaging artists and participants internationally, nationally and locally. It's hugely encouraging to see this investment in the work of BCB and into the city of Stoke-on-Trent - one of 54 areas designated by Arts Council England as a Priority Place due to recognition that local arts investment and engagement is currently too low. Everyone at BCB is extremely proud of our work in the city and the quality of the partnerships we create here. However, there is much more to do as Stoke-on-Trent pursues its strategy to become a major cultural destination and addresses the inequalities impacting people's lives locally. We look forward to playing our part working with the vibrant mix of cultural organisations, artists and communities in the city so inextricably linked with clay."*

Ends

For more information, please contact BCB Communications Manager Gabriella Rhodes on gabriella@britishceramicsbiennial.com or info@britishceramicsbiennial.com.

Notes to editors

In the 2018 – 2022 investment period, BCB received £175,000 per annum Arts Council England NPO investment. *

In the 2022/23 extension year (related to Covid-19 management support), BCB received £175,000 plus a small inflationary increase of £3,220 to give a total grant of £178,220 Arts Council England NPO investment. *

In the 2023 – 2026 investment period, BCB will receive £310,000 per annum Arts Council England NPO investment.

* comprising 828 organisations

Social Media

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About the British Ceramics Biennial:

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 and early-career 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.

The British Ceramics Biennial embraces the heritage of The Potteries as the home of British ceramics. Through the breadth of its work, BCB stimulates creativity and innovation, sharpening 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 the City of Stoke-on-Trent 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.

The 2023 BCB festival runs from 23 September to 5 November 2023.

British Ceramics Biennial funders:

The British Ceramics Biennial receives public funding from Arts Council England and is further supported by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire University.



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