**Strictly embargoed until 00.01 on Monday 13 February 2023**

**Ten artists shortlisted for £10,000** **BCB Award – the UK’s leading ceramics prize**

A vintage car that once belonged to DJ Fatboy Slim will be covered in ceramic tiles by one of the artists shortlisted for this year’s Award - the British Ceramics Biennial’s £10,000 prize for ceramics and the leading platform for contemporary ceramic practice in the UK.

The 1969 Ford Zephyr, which featured in the film Human Traffic and will be covered in mosaics that tell the story of Stoke-on-Trent’s rave culture, is the work of Carrie Reichardt, one of the 10 artists selected for BCB Award. The 2023 BCB Award artists are: **Rebecca Appleby, Ranti Bam, Copper Sounds, Rebecca Griffiths, Dan Kelly, Elspeth Owen, Carrie Reichardt, Mella Shaw, Jasmine Simpson** and **Nicola Tassie**.

This year’s Award shortlist, selected from over 180 entries, features some of the UK’s most innovative artists working with ceramics. From building immersive sound installations to crafting abstract forms, these artists explore the full creative potential of clay for experimentation, risk-taking, activism and play, each of them challenging the ceramics status quo. Their works will form the focal point of the BCB Festival in Stoke-on-Trent in September, when one of them will be awarded £10,000 for excellence, innovation and creative ambition.

Alun Graves, Chair of the BCB Award selection panel and Senior Curator, Ceramics and Glass 1900 - now at the V&A comments: *‘The selection for BCB Award 2023 reflects the extraordinary breadth and diversity of contemporary ceramic practice. Ambitious proposals have come from artists from across generations, presenting an array of different approaches and tackling a range of themes of relevance to today. Exploring issues including the environment, well-being, rave culture, and the post-industrial landscape, and taking the form of ceramic sculpture, installation, and even a mosaiced car, the works promise to be both provocative and celebratory.’*

For BCB Award **Rebecca Appleby**, an artist known for her sculptural and painterly eye, will create a series of abstract forms to explore the notion of ‘Gaia’ – that everything on earth is connected.

For British-Nigerian artist **Ranti Bam**, clay became a way for her to inhabit the material and spiritual culture of the two continents she grew up in. Inspired by a passion of etymology and metaphors, her practice fuses painting, sculpture and performance. Her installation for Award will explore the game ‘Rock, Paper, Scissors’ both literally and metaphorically.

Artist collective **Copper Sounds** use traditional and contemporary processes to explore the physical nature of sound. They experiment with different techniques, shapes and materials and then design, make and play. For Award their visually and sonically immersive installation ‘Sequenced Ceramics’ will explore the acoustic and resonant properties of fired clay.

**Rebecca Griffiths’** sculptures explore our connection to everyday objects that we find in surplus. Objects that are mass produced and designed to have a limited shelf life. For Award her sculptural ceramic installation will imagine a post-technological and post-industrial future in which fragments of communication and industrial infrastructure have been re-configured and distorted through decay and forces of erosion.

**Dan Kelly** creates his work predominantly on the wheel using stoneware and some porcelain. He works with a monochrome palette, which allows him to have clarity of form. His work for Award will be a series of forms representing the changing view of contemporary cities.

**Elspeth Owen’s** practice is focused on the tactile qualities of clay and the process of making. She is, at the age of 84, urgently seeking to answer the question which besets every maker at the end: what to do with the leftovers of a working life? Her site-specific outdoor installation for Award – made up almost entirely of existing clay fragments - will seek to answer this question.

**Mella Shaw** makes objects and site-specific installations centred around recurring themes of balance, tipping points, thresholds and edges. Most recently she has made publicly engaged environmental work addressing the tipping point of the global climate crisis. She will create an immersive ceramic installation and short film for Award to bring to light the urgent issue of sonar pollution and the whale beachings it causes.

**Carrie Reichardt** is known for her large-scale public works and socially engaged practice. For Award she will cover a 1969 Ford Zephyr donated by DJ Fatboy Slim with ceramic tiles decorated to tell the story of Stoke-on-Trent’s rave culture, focussing on Shelley’s nightclub in Longton - the heart of the house and rave scene in the early 90s.

**Jasmine Simpson** grew up and studied in Stoke-on-Trent, which has greatly influenced her work and use of traditional ceramic techniques. For Award she will create an installation exploring the metaphor of the house to look at our connections with our surroundings, society and subconscious. A hand-sculpted ‘Hellmouth’ fireplace – the heart of the home - will be surrounded by ceramic devils and other grotesques.

**Nicola Tassie’s** practice encompasses both wheel-thrown editions of functional pots as well as more sculptural works which explore the expanding precincts of ceramic form. For Award she will create 60 irregular ceramic forms which will be stacked to create a wall structure exploring ideas of space, containment and fragile boundaries.

The BCB Award artists were selected by a panel of leading professionals who are advocates for contemporary art and making, and who bring a variety of perspectives to the decision-making process. They are: Alun Graves, Senior Curator, Ceramics and Glass 1900 - now at the V&A (chair); Stephen Dixon, BCB 2021 Award winner, Artist and Professor Emeritus, Manchester School of Art; Dr Guan Lee, Founder of Grymsdyke Farm, Architect and Associate Professor; Jenni Lomax, Curator, Writer and Visual Arts and Education Consultant; and Clare Wood, Artistic Director & Chief Executive, British Ceramics Biennial.

Award is the headline exhibition in the British Ceramics Biennial, an international contemporary ceramics festival that takes place in Stoke-on-Trent, the home of British ceramics. The Festival returns for its eighth edition from 23 September to 5 November 2023. The full BCB Festival programme will be announced in late spring.

The BCB Festival press preview will be on Tuesday 19 September 2023.

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

Instagram: @british\_ceramics\_biennial

Facebook: /britishceramics.biennial
Twitter: @BCBFestival

**Ends**

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

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

The British Ceramics Biennial (BCB) is an arts organisation based in Stoke-on-Trent with a vision to make change through clay.

BCB develops, sustains and expands innovative ceramics practice and improves lives together with artists and creative communities. This is done by delivering an engaging year-round programme of artists’ commissions, education and community projects. All of which feed into a festival of contemporary ceramics that takes place in Stoke-on-Trent.

Initiated in 2009, the BCB Festival has grown to be the single largest contemporary ceramics event in the UK. The BCB Festival presents artworks from the UK’s leading ceramicists alongside work by international artists, in exhibitions and special events held across the city every two years.

BCB works in partnership with organisations and individuals in the museums, cultural, industry, business, education, community and voluntary sectors across the city in the development and delivery of projects with a particular focus on public engagement.

The next BCB Festival runs from 23 September to 5 November 2023.

**British Ceramics Biennial funders:**

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