

NEIL BROWNSWORD

TASKSCAPE

WHITEGOLD INTERNATIONAL CERAMICS PRIZE 2019 QUARTZ AWARD WINNER

Whitegold are delighted to present Neil Brownsword's inter-connected artworks for St Austell: 'Relic' an installation on the pan kiln at Wheal Martyn, together with a live work 'Taskscape', performed here within the former clay settling tank.

The principles of china clay extraction and refining have changed little since William Cookworthy discovered it in 1746. Traditional wet-mining methods harnessed the forces of erosion and gravity of natural watercourses to 'win' the clay from granite dug manually from hillside sites.

Today explosives, high pressure water cannon and systems of dry mining have greatly increased access to reserves improving maximum yield. The arduous labour once performed by teams of workers with picks and shovels has been substituted by the likes of dump-trucks, bulldozers, centrifugal gravel pumps, jaw crushers and belt conveyors. These 'performative landscapes' coined as 'taskscape' by the social anthropologist Tim Ingold, remain an active assemblage of human and material actions that intertwine in a constant state of flux.

In his performance, Quartz Award winner Neil Brownsword reconnects the relationships between St Austell and the Potteries of North Staffordshire, bound historically by the mining of china clay and its transformation into ceramics. As global economics and new technologies have significantly impacted regional clay extraction and ceramic manufacturing, Neil highlights the human ingenuity embedded within objects and practices that have shaped the identity of industrial regions such as St Austell and Stoke-on-Trent. He draws our attention to the overlooked relationships between human actions and the behaviours of raw materials through his use of replica historic tools from both industries employed to experimentally shape four tonnes of raw china clay.

Neil Brownsword's film 'Taskscape' is displayed also at White River Place, in St Austell town centre. The project has been supported by the following organisations:

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PROJECT**

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