

There was plenty of good work at Stoke-on-Trent's biennial, which ran from 23 September – 5 November

Industrial relations

Now in its fifth edition, the format of the British Ceramics Biennial is well established. The event is centred around Stoke-on-Trent's former Spode Factory – a shabby, but hugely impressive venue – and contains two main exhibitions: AWARD, where 10 largely established artists present new work, and FRESH, which showcases up-and-coming makers. These are complemented by a fistful of other features, such as the launch of Ian McIntyre's Brown Betty, for instance, and another iteration of Neil Brownsword's Factory project.

And if studio- and installation-based ceramics are your thing then there's plenty to enjoy here. Tana West picked

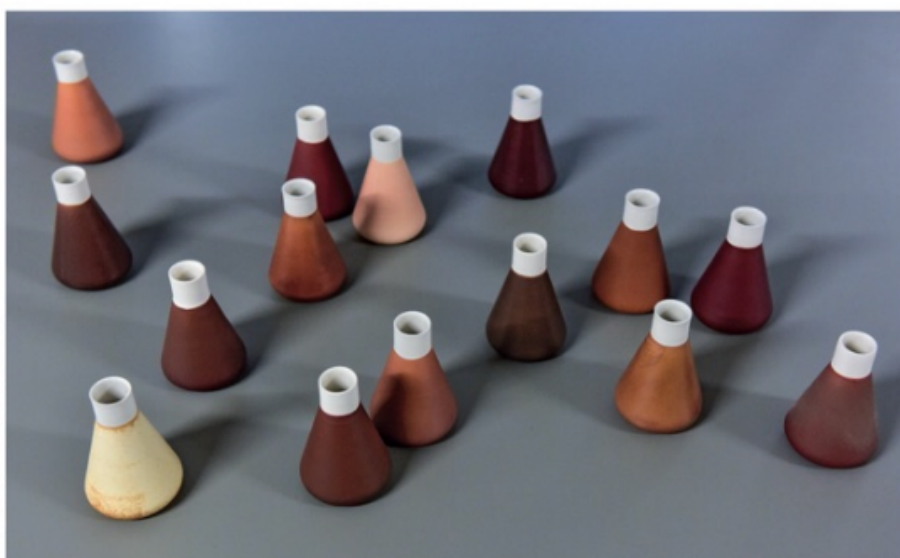
up the main prize (and £5,000, courtesy of sponsor Johnson Tiles) for her installation (UN)WOVEN, made onsite and investigating the divisions that have emerged across Europe post-Brexit. Meanwhile, Eusebio Sanchez won the FRESH award.

One nagging doubt about the event is the lack of any real involvement from the city's ceramic manufacturers – it seemed telling, for instance, that 1882 Ltd chose to show three installations in London rather than Stoke-on-Trent. There's no doubt that the BCB has done a fine job in highlighting the city's relationship with clay; the next step, perhaps, is to move closer to industry too.



TANA WEST

Left: The AWARD winner impressed judges with her monumental work (UN)WOVEN, a ceramic installation made to resemble a rusting iron and barbed wire fence, with bricks made from clay contributed by a network of potters from across Europe.



JOHANNE JAHNCKE

Left: In a similar vein, Danish artist Jahncke has gathered clays from across the continent to create this series of refined porcelain flasks, a beguiling tribute to the colour palette available to ceramists in nature, and presented as part of the 'Ceramics and its Dimensions' display.

INSTALLATION IMAGES: JOEL FIELDS