

**Nick Renshaw at The British Centre, IFC, Guangzhou, P.R China. 2015**

The series of sculptures entitled 'Tong An' (2015) is the most recent body of work by British sculptor Nick Renshaw (PhD) (1967). These ceramic sculptures are made of red earthenware clay and are the result of an extended process of modeling, casting, press-molding and ultimately firing. This firing is done in a so-called Dragon Kiln, the ancient technique of wood firing by which much of the ceramic production throughout China was created during previous centuries.



The title of the series alludes to both the historic area in China where this work is made, Tong An being the name of a much older city now part of modern day Xiamen in Fujian Province. Tong An refers also to an aspiration of shared contentment, its meaning being translated as 'Staying Peacefully Together'.

Though these works are created against the backdrop of the artist's personal experience in a wider contemporary context, the actual process of manufacturing the works can be understood as being the same as that used to produce many ancient ceramic sculptures in China. The most familiar example being the terracotta army buried with Emperor Qin Shi Huang in his mausoleum near Xi'an in Shaanxi Province.



Renshaw has produced work in China for a number of years now and shares his time between his studio bases in Europe and Southern China. As the source of much inspiration for his most recent works Xiamen, or what was known historically as Amoy, has a long and significant place in the shared histories of China and the United Kingdom. One of the most important products exported for centuries through this port has been that of porcelain from the city of Dehua, a city in the hinterland of Xiamen. 'Blanc de Chine' figurines from this region can be found in the collections of country houses throughout the United Kingdom. Renshaw has produced a number of works using this material.

Renshaw completed his PhD in 2014 with the University of Sunderland in the north east of England. His research focused on the European Ceramic Workcentre (EKWC), the leading residence and work centre for artists of all type who wish to use ceramics. His work has been shown widely as well as internationally over the course of the previous two decades; it is in the collection of numerous private, corporate and museum collections around the world; and has been commissioned for a number of large scale public art projects.

For more information please contact The British Centre reception, contact Mr Ewan Evans (Ewan.Evans@fco.gov.uk) in the British Centre or contact the artist directly.

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