



News Release

Olympic Park Commission Advances Tile Mural Potential

Creating two major, contemporary, ceramic murals involving over 30,000 different tile pieces was never going to be easy and British artist Clare Woods spent two years pulling off the two major mural installations, *Brick Field* and *Carpenter's Curve*, in the Olympic Park. The scale, the complexity of the designs and the vagaries of ceramic production led to collaboration with the artisan tile company Craven Dunnill Jackfield and the realisation of mural techniques never previously thought possible on such a vast scale.



The murals are staggeringly large and intricate - inspired by the original industrial site, historical maps of the area and Woods's own experience from once having a studio close-by. The artistic process was unique for Woods – she was not only working to a fixed budget and timeframe but had to trust Jackfield to translate her work into ceramics.

Combining age-old glaze effects with state-of-the-art, digital printing and intricate, water-jet cutting created a mathematical conundrum of boggling complexity. The murals measure 757.2m² and feature over 30,000 tiles in a myriad of shapes and sizes; the tiles took over six months to make and involved 4.5 kilometres of intricate water jet cutting.



The murals were created using four ceramic tile decorating processes involving digital printing and pantone and glaze effects and were put together like giant jigsaws – over 1200m² of tiles were produced and cut, to achieve the required elements to make up the finished murals. Destined to be part of the cultural legacy, the tiles and fixing had to be UV, frost and fade resistant.

Woods describes the project as a collaboration: “I saw the whole concept of the Olympic Park as a modern day Festival of Britain – a platform to show off the best of our artists, craft makers, designers, architects and manufacturers. I therefore knew I wanted to work with a British manufacturer and, having worked previously on a very large scale building cladding design, I had learned that the relationship had to work from the outset; you have to be willing to meet up, talk through your ideas and feel confident that everyone understands their role. The team at Jackfield immediately understood the history and the importance of the commission – it was a unique collaboration”.

Adrian Blundell, Head of Production at Craven Dunnill Jackfield, led the team which was not only responsible for creating the tiles but worked closely with the fixing contractor, representatives of the Olympic Delivery Authority, the main contractor and ultimately delivered a work of art aesthetically true to Woods’s original: “We responded flexibly to whatever came our way; it was a case of establishing trust and empathy combined with a bottomless pit of technical know-how, to resolve the countless issues that arose – the experience was invaluable”.

The murals are still the best kept secret of the Olympic Park – *Brick Field* and *Carpenter's Curve* are hidden away behind the hoardings of the VIP entrance but destined to be public art, visible to all on the major access road to Westfield Shopping Centre.

Since completing the Olympic Park project Craven Dunnill Jackfield has produced an additional Olympic themed mural at Much Wenlock and is currently working on a large commission for a school in Hereford and approaches from the Middle East.

Note to Editor

The project was commissioned by the Contemporary Art Society. Craven Dunnill Jackfield worked in close partnership with a number of companies, including Johnson Tiles and Miller Druck.

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The End

Images: A wide selection of images exists of the construction and completed murals.

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