

# Mute

Keith Harrison

A commission by the National Museum of Wales as part of Fragile, the International Survey of Ceramics Exhibition, April - October 2015

## Project Outline

**Mute** was a new commission for the National Museum Wales and was one of 3 installations specially commissioned from 3 artists to be shown as part of Fragile, a major exhibition of contemporary ceramics in 2015. **Mute** was in part, a post-event response to the sonic and physical assault of a previous sound and clay work *Bustleholme*, a collaboration with *Napalm Death* in 2013, and also a homage to the trumpet mute of Miles Davis. **Mute** explored how a PA system would perform if the sound was completely internalized and then gradually exposed through short bursts of play over a long period. The soundsystem created a dividing partition in the gallery space and consisted of 72 speakers filled with clay slip on one side and a gold tiled wall on the other. On one side of this wall of latent sound were twin turntables to which the public were invited to play horn related music on vinyl singles simultaneously through the PA system in an impromptu sound clash. Over the 3 month duration of **Mute**, and against all expectations, spontaneous audience led interactions with the installation developed into a form of ownership, the public would engage in soundclashes on the dual decks, djing and dancing, adding their own, varied styles of horn related vinyl to the collection.

**Mute** was a vehicle for an audience to directly participate in activating the work in the hope that in the continual pairing of two unconnected vinyl tracks there might at some point be a moment of sonic resonance and in that instant maximum material breakdown would ensue and the wall would crumble, Jericho fashion.