

Simon Pope 'Ballad of the Tin'

Saturday 10 May, 3.00pm to 5.00pm at SpaceX

'Our own near neighbour, fleeing tightened reigns of matrimony, heard you in her horses thunder;
"dolorous bells" with Copper, Lead, Antimony.' Extract from 'Ballad of the Tin'.

Is it possible to have a conversation with a metal? This is the intriguing question artist Simon Pope has asked himself, and others, as part of a project on Dartmoor commissioned by SpaceX titled 'A Song, A Dance, And A New Stannary Parliament'. The answer will be found out at the premiere of 'Ballad of the Tin' on 10th May at SpaceX as Pope and his collaborators, revered Devon folk musicians Jim Causely and Bill Murray, perform this new song and others, based on research into the tin mining heritage of Dartmoor collected over the past year.

The process for the project has been one of conversation between Pope and a range of people with knowledge of tin mining's history, current land-management practices and those with concerns for the Dartmoor landscape's environmental, economic, and cultural future. These include archaeologists, historians, planners, miners, local dialect speakers, artists, and musicians. Inspired by the Stannary Parliaments which arbitrated on all matters relating to tin in the area, Pope held a series of meetings in four of the medieval Dartmoor Stannary towns where tin was historically assayed and sold. Pope's ambition is for the track to become part of the folk song repertoire and heard by thousands.

The project is topical as, for the first time after the tin mines were closed on Dartmoor in the 1930s, work commenced to reopen one to extract tin and tungsten on 14th March at Hemerdon by the Australian company Wolf Minerals. The artist describes his project as an attempt to define a new type of environmental and cultural understanding of landscape in an age of 'post-abstraction' where: 'Exploitation gives way to some other quality of relationship... one which seeks to understand the environment, and human engagements with it, as a mutual relationship of co-dependents.' Simon Pope.

Dr Tom Greeves, chair of the Dartmoor Tin Research Group, who was involved in the project says: 'I'm fascinated to be part of this, because even if you've studied a subject in an academic way for a long period of time, suddenly if you get creative people approaching it in a different direction, and it opens up new vistas, new interpretations of things which are often very exciting.'

This project has been developed by SpaceX in order to work with a cultural landscape that has always had a significant influence in the area, Dartmoor. In doing so, the aim has been to develop a project that draws on the experience and social conditions of the area and actively engages its communities, culminating in a temporary artwork that has a longer term presence.

Simon Pope 'Ballad of the Tin' takes place Saturday 10 May, 3.00pm to 5.00pm at SpaceX, 45 Preston Street, Exeter, EX1 1DF. The event is free and open to all, booking is essential via 01392 431 786 or bookings@spacex.org.uk.

Ends

**45 Preston Street
Exeter, Devon EX1 1DF
United Kingdom**

**+44 (0)1392 431 786
mail@spacex.org.uk
spacex.org.uk**

Notes to editors

A video interview with Simon Pope can be viewed at spacex.org.uk or via <http://vimeo.com/83599778>.

Spacex is a leading contemporary art gallery located in the centre of Exeter. Its diverse programme encourages public engagement with the latest developments in contemporary art through a changing exhibitions programme, which includes new commissions, projects and activities. A significant part of the programme, including artist-led projects, events and research, takes place outside of the gallery. Spacex has an international reputation for presenting ideas from some of the most daring and exciting artists working today.

<http://spacex.org.uk> / @spacexgallery

For further information please contact Spacex marketing manager Rowan Green tel: 01392 431 786, email: rowan@spacex.org.uk



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All images: Image: Simon Pope, 'A Song, A Dance, and a New Stannary Parliament', 2013. Photo Rob Darch

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