

Jeremy Gardiner Topo graphies in Clay



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Cover image Ceramic plaque: *Colwith Force, Waterfall*, Lake District, 2026
This page left photo Glaze layers prior to first firing
Inside back cover Preparatory drawing on transfer film for glaze layers

Notes:

Suspension plaques, signed and dated / placas de suspensão, assinadas e datadas

Glazed stoneware / grés, modelado. Vidrados mate e brilho

Dimensions in cm / in (height x width / diameter x depth)

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FROM PAINT TO CLAY: JEREMY GARDINER'S CERAMIC LANDSCAPES

Isabella Smith



Buttermere Lake
Lake District, 2026
29,5 x 58,5 x 4,5 cm / 23,03 x 11,61 x 1,77 in



Wastwater
Lake District, 2026
29 x 56,5 x 4,5 cm / 11,41 x 22,24 x 1,77 in

Sometimes a seed is sown long before its time comes to grow. In 2001, the British artist Jeremy Gardiner travelled to the northeastern Atlantic coast of Brazil, to the city of Recife, where he visited ceramic sculptor Francisco Brennand's studio. The Oficina Cerâmica Francisco Brennand was an extraordinary sight: a former tile factory of huge proportions, where dozens of artisans helped Brennand create ceramic murals, tiles and sculptures. Seeing Brennand at work with his staff – as well as the ambitious results of such an arrangement – planted what Gardiner describes as 'the germ of an idea' in his mind.¹

That idea would come to fruition more than two decades later, elsewhere in the Lusophone world. In 2020, while visiting Lisbon, Gardiner encountered a ceramic environment created by the Neo-Romantic painter and ceramicist Querubim Lapa. This was the Pastelaria Alcôa bakery in Chiado, which in 1960 – during its former life as a shop selling lottery tickets (Casa da Sorte) – Lapa outfitted with ceramic panels bearing semi-abstract designs and raised sculptural forms.

Finding affinities

This encounter led Gardiner to seek out Lapa's work elsewhere. He was particularly taken by Lapa's public murals, which offer an imaginative update to the time-honoured azulejo tile. Lapa eschewed the azulejo's modular character and standardised flatness in favour of a more fluid surface in low, medium or high relief, in which individual tiles dissolve into an integrated composition. Gardiner builds relief into his paintings, and like Lapa in his ceramic work, his practice is on the boundary between representation and abstraction. The affinity was immediate. As Gardiner described it: 'I felt there was a synergy between the work he [Querubim] was making and the textures and ideas I had for my own paintings'.

Those encounters, decades apart, prompted Gardiner to begin a new body of work: *Topographies in Clay*. The series comprises 19 ceramic wall plaques depicting two areas of England, both with UNESCO World Heritage status: the Jurassic Coast, in the Southwest, and the Lake District, a national park in Cumbria famed for its mountains, lakes and waterfalls. These new works continue Gardiner's decades-long focus on the landscape, while representing a fresh step in its evolution: a new stage wrought through collaboration and through experimentation with a novel medium.

1 Interview with the author, 21 July 2026. All subsequent quotations also from this interview, unless otherwise credited.

TIME MADE VISIBLE

Gardiner spent the summer holidays with his grandmother in Dorset when he was still a boy and together the two would walk the coastal paths of the Isle of Purbeck. As a professional artist he has constantly returned to the coastlines of southern and southwest England, which he has depicted in paint time and time again (notably, even during a period living in the United States: 1984-98). The Jurassic coast (from Orcombe Point in East Devon to Studland Bay in Dorset) features cliffs that speak of dramatic changes across 185 million years of the earth's history. Geological processes are writ large: layers of sedimentary rock reveal shifting seas, tectonic upheaval and the relentless forces of erosion. The Lake District was shaped by the movement of ice, ancient volcanoes and the erosion of rock over immense stretches of time.

Gardiner depicts scenes that evidence these long histories: the dramatic limestone arch of Durdle Door in Dorset, for instance, or the two towering chalk stacks known as the Pinnacle and the Haystack – all three formed through the erosion of water on rock. His scenes of the Lake District explore that force in action today through its waterfalls, which Gardiner has described as 'erosion machines', as well as its famous lakes and tarns, small mountain pools carved by glaciers.

To echo the forces that have created these landscapes, Gardiner's paintings are materially layered: built up, scraped, sanded, abraded and collaged. He has described how sanding back layers of paint, creating a patina, is 'emulating the geological processes that erode the land'. There is a certain neatness in this recent turn towards clay, the earthiest of mediums, to depict the landscape.



Elterwater
Lake District, 2026

29 x 44 cm x 4,5 cm / 11,41 x 17,32 x 1,77 in



Rydal Water
Lake District, 2026

30 x 45 x 4,5 cm / 17,71 x 11,81 x 1,77 in



Loweswater Fells

Lake District, 2026

36 x 45 x 4,5cm / 14,17 x 17,71 x 1,77in



Thirlmere and Helvellyn

Lake District, 2026

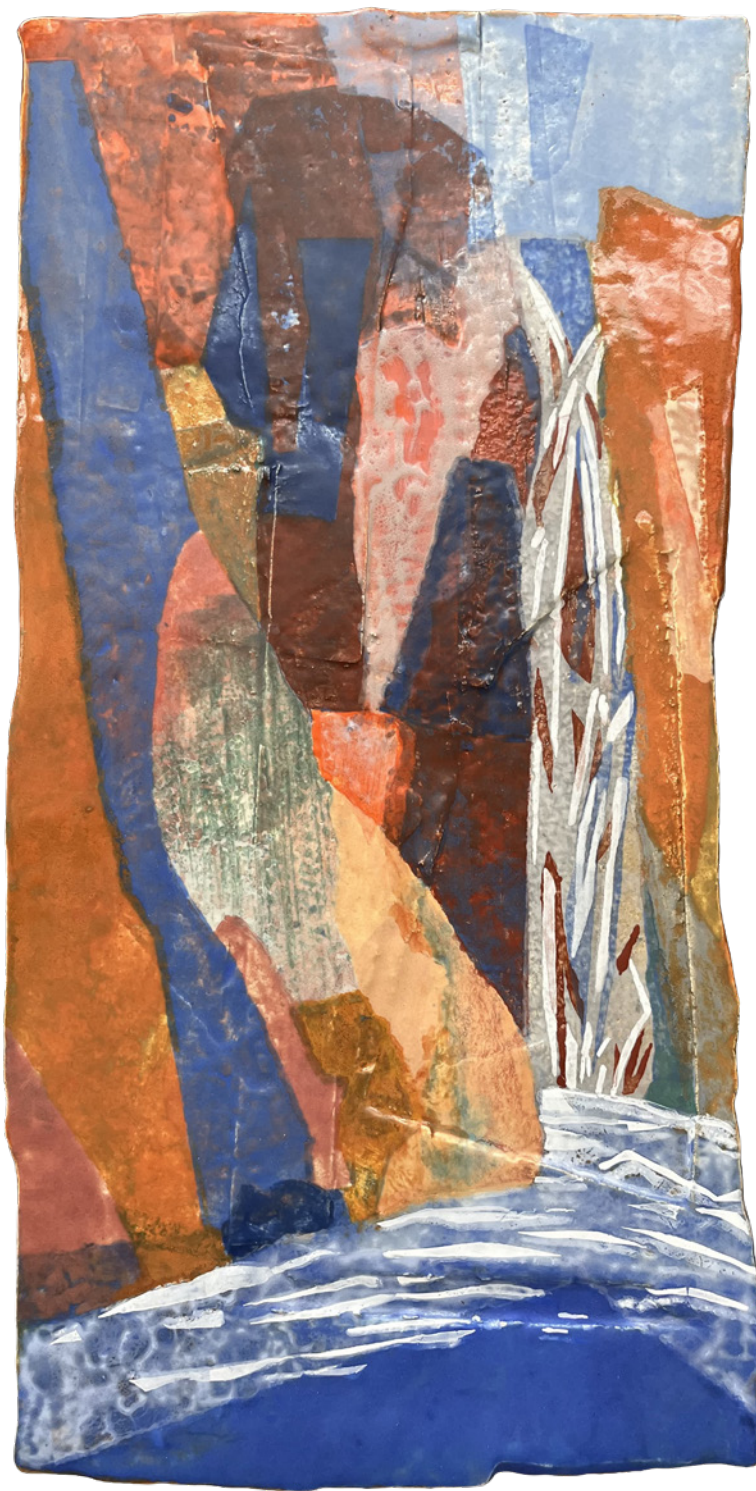
36 x 44,5 x 4,5cm / 14,17 x 17,72 x 1,77in



Colwith Force
Waterfall, Lake District, 2026
44 x 36 x 4,5 cm / 17,32 x 14,17 x 1,77 in



Dungeon Ghyll Force
Waterfall, Lake District, 2026
44 x 30 x 4,5 cm / 17,32 x 11,81 x 1,77 in



Stanley Ghyll Force
Waterfall, Lake District, 2026
58 x 29,5 x 4,5 cm / 22,83 x 11,61 x 1,77 in



Durdle Door
Dorset Coast, 2026
58 x 29,5 x 4,5 cm / 22,83 x 11,61 x 1,77 in

Rydal Falls
Waterfall, Lake District, 2026
35,5 x 45 x 4,5 cm / 13,97 x 17,71 x 1,77 in



Whorney Ghyll Force
Waterfall, Lake District, 2026
44,5 x 37,5 x 4,5 cm / 17,52 x 14,76 x 1,77 in

TRANSLATING BETWEEN MATERIALS



Pinnacle and Haystack
Dorset Coast, 2026

44,5 x 38,5 x 4,5 cm / 17,52 x 15,15 x 1,77 in

To realise the project, Gardiner turned to Suzana Barros, the late Querubim Lapa's wife and Vera Teotónio, her co-collaborator at the Oficina do Castelo, in Lisbon. At home in his studio, Gardiner enjoys mastery of his materials and techniques, yet sharing – and to some degree, relinquishing – this control had its own appeal. 'Pouring paint, working on building the colours, the compositions, the layers, the material: it's a process I'm familiar with,' says Gardiner. 'I saw the possibility of working with Suzana and Vera in the studio and not being in control – and of enjoying the results.'

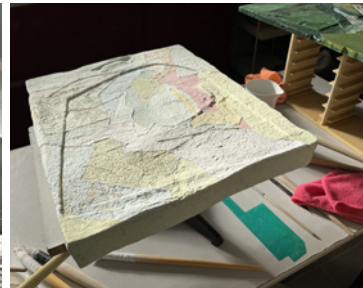
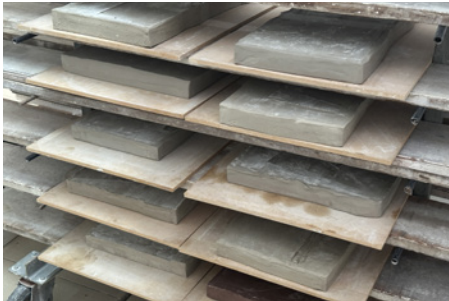
For one month, Gardiner worked with Suzana and Vera in the Oficina do Castelo, where they explored how best to interpret his paintings into clay and glaze. Working in this way, Gardiner joins a long tradition of fine artists collaborating with ceramic specialists: from renowned 18th century sculptors such as Johann Joachim Kändler and the Meissen porcelain factory, to Querubim Lapa and the Viúva Lamego tile factory in mid-century Portugal.

The same chromatic chord is struck in many of Lapa's ceramics as in Gardiner's paintings: their work often shares vivid blues that recall sea and sky. Writing of Lapa, Pedro Moura Carvalho states: 'His blue shades often have the transparency of South Pacific waters, but they transition rapidly to other colours, namely to the shades of grey observable in the heaviest clouds. [...] Details of some of his glazes appear like satellite images of lagoons, rivers and seas.'² Gardiner asked his collaborators to begin their project by producing an extensive range of glazes that echo the colours of his paintings. Suzana Barros and Vera Teotónio at Oficina do Castelo concocted a custom glaze range for Gardiner: each ceramic panel required a separate palette.

The trio faced other technical challenges – not least, in rendering the subtlety of Gardiner's compositions, which move between literal depiction and an abstraction that is altogether more impressionistic. In the 2016 film *Pillars of Light, The Art of Jeremy Gardiner* (dir. Veronica Falcão and Richard Hughes), the artist reflected on the experience his paintings offer the viewer: 'I'm trying to instil in their mind through that particular picture the experience of being right next to it at one minute, looking at a detail or architectural feature, or at another, I might be relatively far away, looking back, so I also want them to feel that sense of space and atmospheric perspective.' One way Gardiner achieves this is through adding to and subtracting from his surfaces, playing with texture and depth.

To create similarly complex surfaces in ceramic form, thick blocks of clay were rolled out into slabs before being pressed against shaped plywood panels built by Gardiner himself in order to imprint recessed areas and create the textural irregularities so characteristic of his paintings. Then came a long, slow wait, as the panels' thickness meant a three-month drying period was necessary to avoid still-damp clay cracking during the great heat of the firings.

2 Pedro Moura Carvalho, *Unearthed: Twentieth-Century Ceramic Art in Portugal* (Arnoldsche, 2021), p. 118



Studio "Oficina do Castelo" – Photography ©2026, Veronica Falcão

To create a detailed guide for the application of glazes, Gardiner cut tracing-paper stencils for use with a brush or a roller. As a glaze transforms through firing – often bearing no relation to their colour and texture when applied – the process is not intuitive in the way painting on wood, canvas or paper can be. It requires extensive planning, thinking several firings ahead, and imagining how the glazes will be transformed each time. What ensued was an exploratory, iterative process involving serendipity as much as art and science. As Richard Sennett writes in *The Craftsman*, 'resistance and ambiguity can be instructive experiences; to work well, every craftsman has to learn from these experiences rather than fight them.'³

Every ceramic plaque received up to four firings, with layers of glaze applied between each. In between was the slow wait for the kiln to fire, then once fired, to cool down sufficiently to be opened without causing thermal shock to the panels.

3 Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (Yale University Press, 2008), p. 10



BREAKING NEW GROUND



Lulworth Crumple
Dorset Coast, 2026

44 x 36,5 x 4,5 cm / 17,32 x 14,37 x 1,77 in

The results of this long process of experimentation, deliberation and execution speak for themselves. The finished body of work in *Topographies in Clay* embodies a more painterly appearance – more expressive, more nuanced – than we are perhaps used to seeing in ceramic form. The hues are both vivid and subtle: a startling red and yellow punctuates the more naturalistic greens and blues of *Colwith Force*; some areas appear poured, rippling or marbled, recalling that effect in Gardiner's paintings; that memorable blue reminiscent of Querubim Lapa's palette appears in accent form in works such as *Rydal Falls* and *Rydal Lake*.

Writing of his painting, Gardiner has stated: 'The eagerness to charge my work with optical complexity has required extensive research to find techniques that capture and mimic the patterns of rock formations.' This research – and this aesthetic complexity – continues, in collaborative form, in this body of work.

Topographies in Clay therefore opens a new stage in Gardiner's practice. His painting practice has been transmuted, as he intended, while its central concerns remain in this new work in clay: deep time and lived time; systematic process and intuition; description and abstraction; accumulation and erasure.



Lodore Falls
Waterfall, Lake District, 2026
44 x 29,5 x 4,5 cm / 17,32 x 11,61 x 1,77 in



Old Harry Rocks
Dorset Coast, 2026
43 x 36 x 4,5 cm / 16,92 x 14,17 x 1,77 in



Jeremy Gardiner

"In Gardiner's paintings we find the same sensation as when walking among mountains – of man's staggering insignificance, and the consequent sense of liberation at being so small and so transitory an episode in the greater scheme of things."

Andrew Lambirth

Born in 1957, Jeremy Gardiner is a graduate of Newcastle University (1975-79) and completed his Masters at the Royal College of Art in London (1980-83). He moved to the United States on a Harkness Fellowship and Churchill Fellowship (1984-98) and relocated with his young family to Bath in 1998. He has taught at the Royal College of Art and Pratt Institute of Art and Design in New York.

Gardiner has exhibited internationally, including at the Venice Biennale, the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the Chengdu Biennale in China. Three books have been published about his work, *Unfolding Landscape* (Lund Humphries, 2013) *South by Southwest* (Sansom & Co, 2020) and *Strata* (Unicorn, 2026) which include essays by art historians, curators and critics. His work has been reviewed in *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Guardian* and *The Sunday Times*.

Gardiner's work is represented in both public and corporate collections including the Victoria and Albert Museum, Government Art Collection, BNP Paribas, Pincent Masons and Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi. Awards include a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship and Arts Council England, British Council and Arts and Humanities Research Council grants. *Pillars of Light*, a documentary film about his work was awarded the Fine Arts Documentary prize at the Fine Arts Film Festival of Santa Barbara in 2016.

jeremygardiner.co.uk



Dob Ghyll

Waterfall, Lake District, 2026

43,5 x 38 x 4,5 cm / 17,12 x 14,96 x 1,77 in



Skelwith Falls

Waterfall, Lake District, 2026

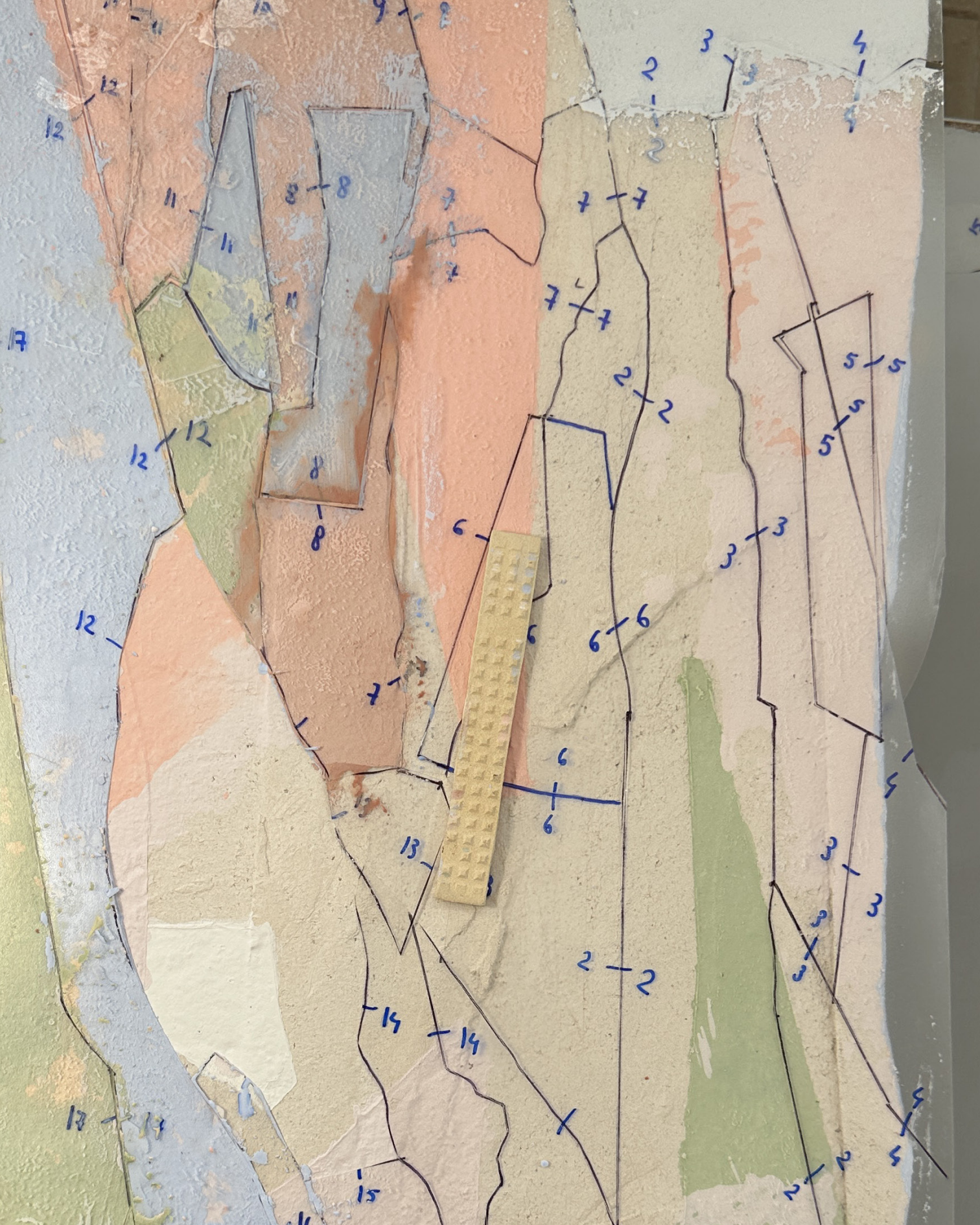
44,5 x 38 x 4,5 cm / 17,52 x 14,96 x 1,77 in



Loweswater

Lake District, 2026

29 x 44 x 4,5 cm / 11,41 x 17,32 x 1,77 in



Jeremy Gardiner Topo graphies in Clay

For decades, the artist Jeremy Gardiner has explored the English landscape in his work through layering and abrading the surfaces of his paintings to echo the geological forces that have shaped the earth.

Inspired by the work of ceramic masters Francisco Brennand and Querubim Lapa, he has embarked on an ambitious new body of work: Topographies in Clay, created in collaboration with Suzana Barros and Vera Teotónio at the Oficina do Castelo in Lisbon.

The resulting ceramic plaques depict landscapes of the Jurassic Coast of East Devon and Dorset and the mountains, lakes and waterfalls of the Lake District: both UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Each piece required layers of bespoke glazes and multiple firings, demanding a surrender of the control Gardiner enjoys in his painting practice. The result is something new: paintings transmuted into ceramics of striking nuance and richness.

Ao longo de décadas, o artista Jeremy Gardiner tem explorado a paisagem inglesa no seu trabalho, acumulando camadas e sujeitando as superfícies das suas pinturas a abrasão para dar voz às forças geológicas que moldaram a terra.

Inspirado na obra de mestres da cerâmica como Francisco Brennand (Brasil, 1927-2019) e Querubim Lapa (1926-2016), Gardiner lançou-se num ambicioso novo corpo de trabalho: Topografias em Barro, criado em colaboração com Suzana Barros e Vera Teotónio na Oficina do Castelo, em Lisboa.

As placas de cerâmica resultantes representam paisagens da Costa Jurássica de East Devon e Dorset e as montanhas, lagos e quedas de água do Lake District, ambas regiões que são Património Mundial da UNESCO.

Cada peça requer vidrados feitos por medida e múltiplas cozeduras, exigindo um abandono do controle que Gardiner aplica na sua prática pictórica. O que resulta é algo de novo: pinturas transmutadas em cerâmica de notável nuance e riqueza.

SPECIAL EDITIONS

Isabella Smith, *Jeremy Gardiner, Topographies in Clay*, Lisboa, 2026

PUBLICATIONS

Rita Gomes Ferrão, *Hansi Staël, Cerâmica, Modernidade e Tradição*, Lisboa, 2014

Rita Gomes Ferrão, *Querubim Lapa, Primeira Obra Cerâmica, 1954-1974*, Lisboa, 2015

António Miranda, *Gentes do Mar, Cerâmica e Outras Artes Decorativas no Portugal do Séc. XX*, Lisboa, 2020

Patrícia Bento d'Almeida, *Victor Palla, Ceramista 1949-1951*, Lisboa, 2021

Paulo Morais-Alexandre, *Laranjeira Santos, Esculturas em Terracota*, Lisboa, 2021

Pedro Moura Carvalho, *Manuela Madureira, Cerâmica de 1957 a 1978: Variações em Azul*, Lisboa, 2023

Pedro Moura Carvalho, *Júlio Santos (1906-1969), Pintor e Ceramista*, Lisboa, 2024

José Luiz de Almeida Silva, *Eduardo Constantino, Pareidolia*, Lisboa, 2024

Pedro Moura Carvalho, *Artur José (1931-2010), o Ceramista-Pintor por Excelência*, Lisboa, 2025

