



## Payloads

Shane Munro at Landings /5

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In 1977 the British Government sold off its ballistics missile programme, removing itself from the space race and simultaneously losing the power, potency and ambition of an Empire.

Surplus Skylark rockets, the main component and most successful of the initiative, continued to be launched, but by other companies and nation states.

The very last of these launched in 2005.

The launch campaign was managed by 44 dedicated scientists and engineers at the Esrange Spaceport in the North of Sweden. At 175km the rocket separated from the payload\* and fell to earth crashing into uninhabited land within the North Pole Circle.

The payload continued to climb to 250km before returning to earth.

On re-entry its parachute failed to open. The impact spilt experiments into the snow and data was irretrievably lost.

For the exhibition 'Payloads' Shane Munro has made two works.

3 litres of asbestos dust has been extracted from within this last Skylark and deposited at a landfill site in the North Pole.

'Lot no.10' (there are 77 lots in total, of various sizes) entitles the holder to 10ml of asbestos from this unique location.

The glass vessel on display accompanies this 'lot' and is intended to contain the material. The exact location of the asbestos is etched into its base. It is modelled on an In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) screw cap container to exacting standards by a scientific apparatus manufacturer. The vessel sits on a plynth of construction rubble from a landfill site in the Vestfossen area.

The second work 'Fluffed 'n Buffed' celebrates half a century of British space endeavour with 22 hand-made clay cups in the form of an IVF screw cap container. The cups have been baked, printed with an image of the damaged payload and installed within a domestic kitchen cupboard.

\*the payload is the top section of the vehicle containing (in this case) scientific experiments, it separates from the rocket motor in space.