



Immediate Release

IWM Contemporary: Jane and Louise Wilson ***Undead Sun***

15 October 2014 – 11 January 2015
Free admission

Press View 15 October 2014, 8-10am

In October 2014 Turner Prize nominated artists Jane and Louise Wilson will premiere a significant new video installation at IWM London. *Undead Sun* has been commissioned to mark the Centenary of the First World War and offers a unique artistic perspective on this era-defining conflict.

During the First World War, the advent of aerial warfare and surveillance triggered rapid advances in optics and other technological innovation. Alongside these, new counter-measures in the arts of concealment and camouflage emerged. Alluding to the threat of exposure from above, *Undead Sun* explores ideas around technology and visibility. The film itself is shown within a specially constructed installation, in which the viewer's own movement and lines of sight are deliberately restricted.

Much of the imagery in the film is inspired by the visual culture of the period. Many sequences are based on the artists' extensive research in the IWM (Imperial War Museums) archives and reflect on the reconstruction of narratives surrounding the war. Uneasy, dream-like sequences are acted out against the ominous backdrop of a giant wind tunnel. Staged vignettes offer glimpses of individual, human-scale dramas, as well as intimations of the darker side of the society of the time. The tunnel itself evokes larger-than-life forces at work, suggesting the relentless and cyclical drive of events. The rotating wooden blades of a fan return us to themes of the aerial and the air, but also hint at the visceral, elemental forces that the war unleashed, the terror of gas attacks, the violence of speed and social transformation.

This is the first iteration of an unfolding project, commissioned by Film and Video Umbrella, for IWM in partnership with MIMA, Middlesbrough and Wolverhampton Art Gallery for the Centenary of the First World War.

About Jane and Louise Wilson

Turner Prize nominated artists Jane and Louise Wilson have been working together since 1989 and have consistently exhibited since then at major international galleries. Solo international exhibitions include *Tempo Suspenso* at Cam Gulbenkian in Lisbon, Portugal and *Unfolding the Aryan Papers* at CGAC Santiago de Compostela in Spain and at 303 Gallery in New York. Their work was also recently included in the Stanley Kubrick retrospective at LACMA Los Angeles.

Within the UK, they have recently had a solo show at Paradise Row in London, following solo exhibitions of new work commissioned by Forma which toured between The Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester, DCA in Dundee and John Hansard Gallery in Southampton. Their most recent film work, *The Toxic Camera* was premiered at The Whitworth Art Gallery and has subsequently been selected for numerous international film festivals.

Jane and Louise Wilson have always made ambitious works, principally working with film, video and photography.

Quotes

Jane and Louise Wilson:

"We are intrigued by the technology and architecture of war and this commission has been a great opportunity for us to develop this further. We began our research in the IWM archive by looking at an account of a First World War cameraman and the advancement of documentary reportage from the First World War, so the motif of the camera was there from very early on. This led us to thinking about the development of aerial photography. In many ways it's very much an abstraction. This abstraction is continued further through the architecture of the Farnborough wind tunnels, where we filmed, and through the use of animated archive film, recording the air flow and pressure experiments conducted there, leading to modern aviation. We began to investigate the development of camouflage through the use of decoys, which became a significant part of the work.

Another strong influence on our project has been Tom McCarthy's beautifully written novel 'C'. It's a book about flight written recently, but about the First World War, and this perspective of distance is something that's very important to our approach. The visual motif of the wind tunnel echoes this, especially in the context of Walter Benjamin's essay *The Angel of History* which has also shaped our thinking. From this point of view, to show *Undead Sun* at IWM at this particular historical moment is especially resonant."

Curator of Art at IWM, Sara Bevan:

"Working with Jane and Louise on researching this project in IWM's archives has certainly revealed some fascinating aspects of our collections for me. This installation is a layered and refreshingly different meditation on specific aspects of the First World War and I think visitors will be intrigued, surprised and perhaps disturbed by Jane and Louise's film. This is exactly why contemporary art is so important for us at IWM; artists' work allows us to look at a subject through a new lens, or from a different perspective, and continue to raise questions about a subject which, in this case, might initially appear to be very familiar".

Director, Film and Video Umbrella, Steven Bode:

"Film and Video Umbrella have had a long-standing creative relationship with Jane and Louise Wilson that now covers two decades, and includes their landmark multi-screen installation, *A Free and Anonymous Monument*, at Baltic in Gateshead (2003). It's great to be working with them again – on a piece of equivalent ambition and impact, and one, which, like so many of their works, endows enduring but not-always-visible historical themes with powerful contemporary resonance. The project is benefitting hugely from the backing, and the context, of the IWM, and will, I'm sure, add to the mood of reflection and enquiry prompted by the First World War centenary. After the premiere at IWM London, *Undead Sun* will travel (to MIMA in Middlesbrough and Wolverhampton Art Gallery) and also evolve as it does so, in ways that echo the changing horizons and perspectives of the war over its four-year span. We look forward to working with Jane and Louise and our co-commissioning partners on continuing to develop the project over this time".

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– Ends –

**For further press information including interview requests and images, please contact:
Rosie Linton, Press Officer: 020 7416 5436 rlinton@iwm.org.uk**

Events

**Artists' talk with Jane and Louise Wilson
10 January 2015, 2.30-3.30pm**

Jane and Louise Wilson will discuss their new film installation *Undead Sun* and set it within the context of their wider practice.

Art Exhibition

Truth and Memory (until 8 March 2015) IWM London presents the largest exhibition of British First World War art for almost 100 years. This major retrospective comprises over 120 artworks and features the most iconic images to emerge from the First World War, including paintings by Paul Nash, Percy Wyndham Lewis, CRW Nevinson, Stanley Spencer and William Orpen, as well as lesser known, yet significant works, by artists such as Anna Airy, George Clausen and Gilbert Rogers.
Free Admission

Notes to Editors:

IWM Contemporary

IWM Contemporary is a programme of exhibitions by leading artists and photographers whose work is a response to war and conflict. Upcoming exhibitions include a display by **Hew Locke** which will feature new beaded wall drawings and work reflecting on shipping and war at sea opening 19 February 2015. A major artist intervention also by **Hew Locke** takes place on board HMS *Belfast* during summer 2015. An installation by **Imogen Stidworthy** opens June 2015 and will incorporate sound and sculptural elements, exploring the difficulties of communicating the experience and memory of trauma.

Film and Video Umbrella commissions, curates, produces and presents film, video and other moving-image works by artists that are staged in collaboration with galleries and other cultural partners. Since the late 1980s, Film and Video Umbrella has been at the forefront of this vibrant and expanding area of practice, promoting innovation through its support of some of the most exciting figures on the contemporary scene. During this time, the organisation has commissioned and produced over 100 different artists' projects, ranging from ambitious multi-screen installations to shorter film and video pieces, as well as numerous online commissions. www.fvu.co.uk Follow us on Twitter: [@FilmVidUmbrella](https://twitter.com/FilmVidUmbrella)

IWM London

IWM London - IWM's flagship branch - tells the stories of those whose lives have been shaped by war through the depth, breadth and impact of our Galleries, displays and events. Visit our brand new First World War Galleries featuring over 1,300 objects from IWM's collections, explore what life was like at home during the Second World War in [A Family in Wartime](#); delve into the world of espionage in [Secret War](#); visit our award-winning [Holocaust Exhibition](#); discover stories of bravery in [The Lord Ashcroft Gallery: Extraordinary Heroes](#); see work by some of Britain's most significant 20th Century artists in our [art galleries](#) or take in our latest major temporary exhibitions. Our family learning sessions and events encourage debate and challenge people's perceptions of war.

Open daily from 10am – 6pm (except 24 - 26 December)
IWM London, Lambeth Road, London, SE1 6HZ.
T: 020 7416 5000 E: mail@iwm.org.uk
iwm.org.uk / @I_W_M / www.facebook.com/iwm.london

IWM

IWM (Imperial War Museums) tells the story of people who have lived, fought and died in conflicts involving Britain and the Commonwealth since the First World War.

Our unique Collections, made up of the everyday and the exceptional, reveal stories of people, places, ideas and events. Using these, we tell vivid personal stories and create powerful physical experiences across our five museums that reflect the realities of war as both a destructive and creative force. We challenge people to look at conflict from different perspectives, enriching their understanding of the causes, course and consequences of war and its impact on people's lives.

IWM's five branches attract over 2 million visitors each year. [IWM London](#), our flagship branch, marks the Centenary of the First World War with new permanent First World War Galleries and a new Atrium with iconic large object displays. Our other branches are [IWM North](#), housed in an iconic award-winning building designed by Daniel Libeskind; [IWM Duxford](#), a world-renowned aviation museum and Britain's best preserved wartime airfield; [Churchill War Rooms](#), housed in Churchill's secret headquarters below Whitehall; and the Second World War cruiser [HMS Belfast](#).

First World War Centenary

2014 - 2018 marks the centenary of the First World War, a landmark anniversary for Britain and the world. IWM will mark the centenary by leading a vibrant, four year programme of cultural activities across the country. For more information, visit www.1914.org.

