



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## ***Imperial War Museums to host new work of art by STIK and Thierry Noir on original Berlin Wall sections to mark 30 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall***

In November 2019 Imperial War Museums (IWM) will mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, one of the most iconic and defining moments of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

From 5 November- 1 December 2019 the brand new work of art from renowned street artists STIK and Thierry Noir will be displayed to the public for the very first time at IWM London. In reference to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the artists will create the artwork directly onto two original pieces of the Berlin Wall, recovered from Berlin especially for the installation. The work of art will reflect on this pivotal moment in world history and its lasting legacy today. It will also explore the deep and symbolic connections between the Berlin Wall and street art.

Street art began appearing illicitly on the Berlin Wall in the early 1980s as a form of artistic resistance and political commentary. French artist Thierry Noir was a trailblazer of this movement, being the first artist to systematically paint long stretches of the Berlin Wall. Noir lived in a squat overlooking the Wall and painted his now iconic heads on to the Wall between 1984 and its fall on 9 November 1989.

The dramatic fall of the Berlin Wall signalled the end of the Cold War, triggering the reunification of Germany, the subsequent dissolution of the USSR and the reshaping of Europe.

STIK continues the tradition of street art as a tool of social change. STIK used his trademark stick figures in unofficial murals to voice the struggles facing him and his community, notably homelessness. He later gained international notoriety with monumental works such as 'Migrant' in New York and 'Big Mother,' the tallest mural in Britain, protesting the destruction of social housing.

This new work of art from STIK and Thierry Noir will stand outside IWM London opposite another Berlin Wall artwork, created by the East German artist INDIANO at the time of the fall of the Wall. INDIANO's striking piece, emblazoned with the inspirational message "Change Your Life", is a highlight of IWM's Cold War collection.

Paris Agar, IWM curator, said: "In a world where walls are rising, not falling, commemorating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall allows us to look back on this major historical moment from a 21<sup>st</sup> century perspective. The partnership between renowned street artists Thierry Noir and STIK will build on a tradition that has now become synonymous with the Berlin Wall and reinvent it for audiences today. We hope that the artwork will encourage our visitors to consider the significant impact of the fall of the Berlin Wall and we are delighted to be hosting it at IWM London."

STIK said: "I'm honoured to paint on the Berlin Wall with my friend Thierry Noir given that he helped change the course of history through his art in the 1980s. I hope our collaboration on the Berlin Wall will highlight the importance of connection between people through times of division and change."

Thierry Noir said: "My generation has a duty to explain what life was like with the Berlin Wall in a way that young people will not repeat the mistakes of the past. I first met STIK in Berlin in 2012 and we became friends. For the thirtieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall our new joint work on two original Berlin Wall sections is a message to these future generations."



**Ends**

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**Notes to editors**

**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 which attract over 2.5 million visitors each year are IWM London, IWM's flagship branch that recently transformed with new, permanent and free First World War Galleries alongside new displays across the iconic Atrium to mark the Centenary of the First World War; 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.

**STIK**

STIK started painting his trademark stick-figures illegally in London streets during periods of homelessness and they became a symbol of Hackney in the early 2000s. His subtle line drawings often interact with the changing skyline of the city, humanising the landscape and give voice to the often-overlooked communities who live there. Gaining international recognition but staying true to his roots in 2014 STIK painted the then tallest mural in Britain, 'Big Mother' on a condemned council block as a protest against the demolition of social housing. Associated sales were used to set up and provide core arts funding for art charities in the surrounding area. Screen prints of STIK's 'Sleeping Baby' mural at Homerton Hospital in Hackney raised essential funding for the art rehabilitation room in the wake of austerity cuts. In New York, STIK's 2016 mural 'Migrant' marked the 'Avenue of The Immigrants, and the overall project provided core funding for the New York Tenement Museum's education program for newly arrived migrants. STIK continues his muralism and activism around the world from London to New York to Tokyo and is still based in Hackney.

<http://stik.org>

<https://www.instagram.com/stikstudio>

**Thierry Noir**

Thierry Noir was born in 1958 in Lyon, France, and came to Berlin in January 1982. In April 1984, Noir began to paint the Berlin Wall and is credited as being the first artist to do so systematically. Noir's objective was to perform one real revolutionary act: To paint the Berlin wall, to transform it, to make



it ridiculous, and to help destroy it, pre-empting its ultimate fall in 1989. Noir covered kilometre upon kilometre of the Berlin Wall, more than 3 metres high, with bright, vivid colours, aiming not to embellish the wall but to demystify it. Noir's iconic, bright and seemingly innocent works painted on this deadly border symbolised a sole act of defiance and a lone voice of freedom.

Since the 1980s, Noir's exploits and highly distinctive visual language have gone on to become world famous and immortalised in popular culture such as Wim Wenders' 1987 film *Wings of Desire* and the cover of U2's album *Achtung Baby*. Noir is today being increasingly recognised as a key forerunner of the modern street art movement.

Noir's practice has a strong emphasis on line and aims to simplify forms to their most basic elements. This simplicity reflected the necessity of painting quickly outdoors in a hazardous environment with very real risks to his personal safety. Noir reacted to his environment and his monsters are a metaphor for the Wall itself, each one relating to his experiences or feelings of what he calls a 'killing machine'.

Noir's work is held in many important public and private collections around the world including Battery Park (New York), the Newsuem (Washington DC), The Allied Musuem (Dayton, Ohio), Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles), and the Wende Museum (Los Angeles).

<https://thierrynoir.com>

<https://www.instagram.com/thierrynoir/>

### **IWM London**

IWM London tells the stories of those whose lives have been shaped by war through the depth, breadth and impact of our Galleries, displays and events. Explore the First World War Galleries and iconic Atrium; visit our Holocaust Exhibition; discover stories of bravery in The Lord Ashcroft Gallery: Extraordinary Heroes or take in our latest major temporary exhibitions.

Open Daily: 10am – 6pm. Last entry 30 minutes before closing. (Closed 24 - 26 December). Free Admission

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