



Iconic poppy sculptures make permanent homecoming to IWM North this Remembrance

- From 10 November 2021, the iconic poppy sculptures will return to Manchester for the first time since 2018 as part of a dramatic new artwork, titled *Poppies*.
- Comprising thousands of handcrafted ceramic flowers, *Poppies* will make its permanent home within the unique architecture of IWM North's Air Shard.
- The opening of *Poppies* coincides with Remembrance programming across IWM's branches, including IWM's annual Remembrance Debate in partnership with BBC Radio 3's Free Thinking and *Breaking the Silence* performances.



© IWM. *Poppies: Wave and Weeping Window*.

Following the success of *Poppies: Wave and Weeping Window*, which toured to IWM London and IWM North in 2018 to mark the end of the First World War centenary, 2021 will see the iconic sculptures combined and returned to IWM North, where they will go on permanent display as part of a brand new artwork. Reimagined into a dramatic new sculptural form, *Poppies* will be displayed within the unique architecture of IWM North's Air Shard from 10 November 2021.

Poppies: Wave and Weeping Window were originally part of the installation *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* – poppies and original concept by artist Paul Cummins and installation designed by Tom Piper – by Paul Cummins Ceramics Limited in conjunction with Historic Royal Palaces. The installation was originally at HM Tower of London from August to November 2014 where 888,246 poppies were displayed, one for every British or Colonial life lost at the Front during the First World War. *Poppies: Wave and Weeping Window* travelled to 19 locations around the UK between 2014 and 2018, with *Wave* concluding at IWM North and *Weeping Window* concluding at IWM London. This major four-year tour encouraged millions of people across the country to reflect on their own links to the First World War as a shared experience. The sculptures now form part of IWM's collection and, in their new permanent home, visitors to Manchester are invited to reconnect with the poppies as both a contemporary artwork and as a means by which to reflect on the way war shapes lives.

Poppies were a familiar sight on the battlefields of the Western Front, where they flourished in the devastated landscape. Since John McCrae's 1915 poem *In Flanders Fields*, which concluded with the lines 'We shall not sleep, though poppies grow / In Flanders fields,' the poppy has endured as a symbol of remembrance. *Poppies*, which will cascade 30 metres down and pool within the Air Shard, will help visitors to refresh their understanding of the poppy as a symbol of the very human cost of war.

Laura Clouting, Senior Curator of First World War and Early 20th Century at IWM, says: “*It feels really fitting to have the poppies return and make their home at IWM North. IWM was founded over a century ago amidst the First World War to ensure that we never forget the human cost of war. This sculpture, both an artwork and a piece of social history, will provide visitors with the opportunity to consider these consequences of war afresh.*”

The unveiling of *Poppies* at IWM North coincides with Remembrance Sunday in 2021 and will be accompanied by Remembrance themed programming across the museum’s branches and online. This will include IWM’s annual Remembrance Debate, in partnership with BBC Radio 3’s Free Thinking, and *Breaking the Silence* at IWM London and IWM North.

Remembrance Debate

How do we define a War?

Tuesday 9 November 2021

Online

IWM’s annual Remembrance Debate, in partnership with BBC Radio 3’s Free Thinking, will see a panel of historians and activists explore the impact of the words we use to describe conflict.

Together, they will question what and who shape the language we use, whether terms are static, and what difference that makes to public perception and Remembrance. Chaired by Free Thinking’s Presenter Anne McElvoy, this year’s Debate – *How do we define a War?* – will be broadcast by BBC Radio 3’s Free Thinking at 10pm on Tuesday 9 November 2021. It will be available on BBC Sounds and as a BBC Radio 3 Arts & Ideas podcast.

Remembrance Sunday at IWM

Sunday 14 November

IWM London, IWM Duxford

Free

A two-minute silence will be observed across all five of IWM branches on Remembrance Sunday at 11am, with Ceremonies of Remembrance taking place at IWM London and IWM Duxford on 14 November. The Ceremony at IWM London will commence with a violin recital by a young musician supported by Lambeth Music Service, on a violin made from sycamore and pine trees that grew in the former battlefields on the Western Front. The two-minute silence will then follow. At IWM Duxford, the two-minute silence will be followed by a poppy drop from a historic aircraft. Please note that on Remembrance Sunday, HMS Belfast will open at the later time of 11.30am due to a private annual Remembrance service. IWM London, IWM Duxford, IWM North and Churchill War Rooms will observe usual opening hours.

Breaking the Silence

Sunday 14 November, 11.02am, 12.10pm, 1.10pm

IWM London, IWM North

Free

At 11.02am the silence will be broken at IWM London and IWM North. Working with The Midi Music Company at IWM London and ThickSkin at IWM North, *Breaking the Silence* will see groups of young people, aged 11 to 18, premiere brand-new performances exploring what contemporary Remembrance means to them. IWM North’s performance will include song, movement and video installation, while IWM London’s performance will feature spoken word performances and original music created with the support of workshop leaders MC Angel and Ahmad Dayes.

Ends

For further press information, images and interview requests please contact:

Hannah Boulton, Communications Officer (Exhibitions & Programming), HBoulton@iwm.org.uk, 07966 626 241

Poppy Andrews, Communications Manager (Exhibitions & Programming), PoAndrews@iwm.org.uk, 07581 622 157

Notes to Editors

The installation *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* by artist Paul Cummins and designer Tom Piper was a collaboration between Historic Royal Palaces and Paul Cummins, staged at HM Tower of London in 2014 to mark the beginning of the Centenary of the First World War. The UK tour of *Poppies: Wave and Weeping Window* was presented by 14-18 NOW, the UK's arts programme for the centenary of the First World War. *Poppies: Wave and Weeping Window* were purchased for the nation by The Clore Duffield Foundation and Lady Susie Sainsbury's Backstage Trust in 2014, and were donated to IWM's permanent collection in 2018.

Poppies at IWM North opens on 10 November 2021.
Press View: 9 November 2021

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**, which will open extensive new Second World War and The Holocaust Galleries in autumn 2021; **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**.

IWM North

The multi award winning IWM North brings Imperial War Museums' national collection to northern audiences. Designed by world-renowned architect Daniel Libeskind to represent a globe shattered by conflict, the iconic building, innovative and dynamic programming, use of digital media through hourly Big Picture Shows and public events explore how war shapes lives and inspires and encourages debate.

Open Wednesday to Sunday: 10am – 5pm except during school holidays and half term, when we are open seven days a week. Also open bank holidays. Last entry 30 minutes before closing. Closed 24 – 26 December. Free admission.

IWM North, The Quays, Trafford Wharf Road, Manchester M17 1TZ (close to MediaCityUK Metrolink and Junction 9 of the M60)

T: 020 7416 5000

iwm.org.uk / @IWMNorth / www.facebook.com/iwm.north

Paul Cummins

Paul Cummins MBE is a ceramic artist, internationally renowned for the installation *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* at HRP Tower of London 2014, as well as many other installations including his work on the Cultural Olympiad in 2012. Locations for previous works include the Houses of Parliament, Chatsworth House, Althorp Estate and Blenheim Palace. Paul was inspired to produce a ceramic poppy to honour every British or Colonial life lost at the Front during the First World War.

Tom Piper

Tom Piper MBE was Associate Designer for the Royal Shakespeare Company from 2004 to 2014, and was closely involved in the redevelopment of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. His theatre credits include over 30 productions for the RSC, including the award-winning History series. Other recent designs include *The Duchess*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear* (Citizens Theatre), *Faith* (Coventry City of Culture/RSC), *Tamburlaine* (TFANA New York), *Nora* (Young Vic Theatre), and *Zorro the Musical* (West End and world tour). Piper's opera credits include *Eugene Onegin*, *Don Giovanni*, *Pelleas and Melisande* (Garsington), *Macbeth*, *Falstaff* (Scottish Opera), *Orfeo* (ROH and Roundhouse). Tom collaborated with Alan Farlie Architects on the exhibition *Shakespeare: Staging the World* in 2012 as part of the Cultural Olympiad at the British Museum and on the recent *Alice in Wonderland* exhibition at the V&A. Tom is Associate Designer at the Kiln Theatre. His many awards include an Olivier Award (costume design) for the Histories series.

BBC Radio 3

Since it launched in 1946, the Third Programme/BBC Radio 3 has been a bold pioneer in the cultural world. It is one of the world's foremost presenters, creators, commissioners and curators across classical, folk, world, jazz and contemporary music as well as drama, philosophy and ideas. The station has always nurtured extraordinary artistic talents, provided a platform for important scientific and political debates/announcements, and broadcast ground-breaking experimental drama – always while delivering its core aim of connecting audiences with pioneering music and culture. The station is also the most significant commissioner of new and contemporary music in the UK, with 35 new works commissioned annually and broadcasts over 600 concerts a year, including live broadcasts from the greatest classical music festival in the world (BBC Proms). Radio 3's In Concert programme alone reaches the equivalent of 250 packed concert halls a week, and the BBC Orchestras and Choirs give around 400 concerts a year in over 60 UK locations.



www.bbc.co.uk/radio3

Midi Music

The Midi Music Company (MMC) is an innovative music education and talent development charity based in Deptford, south London. They champion excellence through their educational programmes, nurturing the musical talent of vulnerable and disadvantaged young people aged 11-30, and empowering them with the skills and confidence to seek careers in music and the creative industries. Since its foundation in 1995, MMC has supported nearly 30,000 children and young people with their educational and talent development programme, [CICAS®](#) (Creative Industries Careers Advice Service). Many CICAS® alumni have achieved critical acclaim in the music industry, notably Kae Tempest, Shingai, The Noisettes, United Vibrations, BASCA Composer Award Winner, Cevanne Horrocks-Hopayian, Jazz FM Innovation and Live Experience of The Year Award Winners 2019, Steam Down, Jazz FM Breakthrough Act Winner, drummer and producer Yussef Dayes.



ThickSkin

ThickSkin is an award-winning touring theatre company based in Manchester, working across live and digital platforms. We create bold and ambitious theatre; reaching an inspiring young, new and diverse audiences across the world through our distinctive physicality and cinematic style. We nurture talent across all areas of theatre-making, providing a springboard for artists who are ready to take a leap. Our work draws on many styles to create visceral and multi-layered performances that tell stories in new and inspiring ways. From live stage productions, to 360° virtual reality experiences, to immersive audio plays, we create work that is rooted in contemporary culture. The company was established in 2010 by co-Directors, Neil Bettles and

The logo for ThickSkin, with the word 'ThickSkin' in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Laura Mallows. The duo have led ThickSkin through the last decade, always striving to create space for under-represented voices to be heard and celebrated in theatre. Last year, while theatres were affected by the pandemic, ThickSkin reached over 36,000 people through digital engagement and more than 1,000 young people globally through digital learning resources, designed to support drama and dance students while schools were closed. ThickSkin is committed to supporting young people and early-career artists through education, training and employment in the arts. We work hard to reach new audiences through our work and especially young people who have less opportunities or interest in going to the theatre. For more information visit www.thickskintheatre.co.uk.

Lambeth Music Service

Lambeth Music Service is the lead organisation for Lambeth Sounds Music Hub collaborating with schools, local services, partner organisations and festivals to deliver high quality and engaging musical experiences for Lambeth residents. LMS employs over 100 specialist music educators who work with over 6500 young people in schools and music centre's every year. LMS also provides a wide range of CPD and training opportunities for music teachers and local practitioners. Partner organisations provide many additional opportunities for young people to take part in creative workshops, projects, performances and holiday courses.

