



## ***IWM London's Culture Under Attack season reveals how war threatens the treasures that make us human***

*Culture Under Attack* is a free season of exhibitions, live music, performances and interventions that explore how war threatens not just people's lives, but also the very things that help make lives worth living. Taking place at IWM London from 5 July 2019 to 5 January 2020, the season spans architecture, photography, art and music, revealing why some people try to eradicate or exploit culture, while others risk everything to protect, celebrate or rebuild that which defines us as human beings.

Curated in partnership with Historic England, ***What Remains*** (5 July 2019 – 5 January 2020) explores why culture and heritage are attacked during war. The exhibition will highlight both historic and contemporary instances where buildings, places, art and artefacts have been deliberately targeted by people who wish to exploit or even erase whole civilizations from history, as well as examples of resistance, protection and restoration.

Taking IWM's own story as its starting point, ***Art in Exile*** (5 July 2019 – 5 January 2020) uncovers how cultural treasures in British museums and galleries were evacuated and protected during the Second World War. Presenting that which was saved and referencing that which was not, the exhibition will examine the important wartime role of cultural organisations and the balance they struck between hiding, preserving and displaying collections.

Just as buildings and artworks are threatened during conflict, so too is music. ***Rebel Sounds*** (5 July 2019 – 5 January 2020) is an immersive exhibition that reveals how groups and individuals used music to resist, rebel and speak out against war and oppression. Specifically drawing on examples from Nazi Germany in the 1930s, Northern Ireland in the 1970s, Serbia in the 1990s and present day Mali, the exhibition will explore the significance of music in relation to cultural and personal identity.

Offering unique opportunities to see some of these extraordinary individuals in performance and in conversation, ***Rebel Sounds Live*** is a series of live interventions and discussions with those taking personal risks for the culture they love. Exploring stories from the genres of Syrian Death Metal and Serbian Techno to African Desert Blues, events will take place throughout the season, revealing the realities of performing at risk of serious punishment, arrest or death.

Other examples of cultural resistance, including events with Stephen Coates of the ***X-Ray Audio Project***, will reveal the story of Cold War Russian bootleggers who defied government bans on Western music by secretly etching forbidden music onto discarded X-rays called 'bone records'. Discussions and live record cutting demonstrations will take place both at IWM London (21 September 2019) and the World of Words Tent at **WOMAD Festival** (27 July 2019). Other event highlights include a discussion on the Syrian Stonemasonry Training Programme as part of **London Craft Week** (8 May 2019), led by World Monuments Fund Britain; and an IWM Institute\* panel discussion at **Hay Festival** (30 May 2019), with experts including *Art in Exile* curator Alex Walton, the author and poet Ben Okri and Tommy Wide, former assistant director at the Freer Sackler Galleries. The discussion will be chaired by Will Gompertz, BBC Arts Editor.

The season will also present the third annual **IWM Remembrance Lecture** (6 November 2019), made in partnership with BBC Radio 3, bringing together artists, experts, eyewitnesses and the public to discuss

cultural memory and its physical protection and preservation in conflict zones. ***Breaking the Silence*** (10 November 2019) will see IWM London taken over by a new performance exploring culture, identity and conflict, created by young artists in partnership with Serious, producers of live jazz, international and contemporary music.

**Ends**

**For further press information and interview requests please contact:**

Poppy Andrews, Communications Manager (Exhibitions and Programming) [PoAndrews@iwm.org.uk](mailto:PoAndrews@iwm.org.uk) / 020 7091 3069

Hannah Carr, Communications Officer (Exhibitions and Programming) [HCarr@iwm.org.uk](mailto:HCarr@iwm.org.uk) / 020 7416 5365

**Notes to editors**

***Culture Under Attack***

5 July 2019 – 5 January 2020

Press View: 3 July 2019

Free season

#CultureUnderAttack

\* The IWM Institute for the Public Understanding of War and Conflict is a hub to explore and experiment with innovative ways of deepening public understanding of the causes, course and consequences of war and conflict through research, public programming and digital innovation. [iwm.org.uk/iwm-institute](http://iwm.org.uk/iwm-institute)

**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  
IWM London, Lambeth Road, London, SE1 6HZ

T: 020 7416 5000

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**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**.

**Historic England**

[Historic England](#) is the public body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment, from beaches and battlefields to parks and pie shops. We protect, champion and save the places that define who we are and where we've come from as a nation. We care passionately about the stories they tell, the ideas they represent and the people who live, work and play among them. Working with communities and specialists we share our passion, knowledge and skills to inspire interest, care and conservation, so everyone can keep enjoying and looking after the history that surrounds us all.



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