

Michael Rakowitz and Heather Phillipson among world-leading artists chosen for Imperial War Museums' £2.5m art commissioning programme



- **Renowned international artists commissioned to create new works for the IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund**
- **Five organisations from across the UK have been appointed by IWM as co-commissioning partners**
- **A further eight organisations from IWM's War and Conflict Subject Specialist Network selected to receive smaller commission grants, with applications for seven remaining places opening from today**
- **Two major works commissioned for IWM's own sites, to be announced later this year as part of the IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund**
- **The IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund builds on the vision and reach of 14-18 NOW, the UK's arts programme for the First World War centenary, which engaged 35 million people**

Today, Imperial War Museums (IWM) is pleased to reveal details of the IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund, a national programme of 22 ambitious artist commissions which will see brand new works by **Michael Rakowitz, Heather Phillipson, Compagnie XY** and **Cathy Wilkes** span the length and breadth of the UK.

Building on over 100 years of contemporary art commissioning by IWM, this new initiative continues the vision and reach of 14-18 NOW, the official UK arts programme for the First World War centenary, and has been made possible thanks to the success of Peter Jackson's critically acclaimed film *They Shall Not Grow Old*, co-commissioned by IWM and 14-18 NOW. A share of the film's royalties – £2.5 million – will see investment in artists and arts experiences as IWM partners with 20 cultural organisations and 22 artists from across the UK. The fully funded commissions will each be inspired by the heritage of conflict.

Five major partners have been appointed by IWM as co-commissioners, each to receive £250,000: **The Hunterian** in Glasgow; **Glynn Vivian Art Gallery** in Swansea; **BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art** in Gateshead; **Ulster University** in Derry-Londonderry; and **Leicester Museums**. Working with five world-leading artists, these joint commissions will be displayed between 2023 and 2024 and explore themes ranging from care work in conflict to the current refugee crisis.

At **BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art**, Iraqi-American artist **Michael Rakowitz** will develop a new commission that considers anti-war activism as the foundation for a monument that can serve as

a catalyst for healing, cultural exchange and kinship. Presented in BALTIC's largest gallery space from summer 2023, Rakowitz's project will invite Gateshead's local communities to participate in the making of a public space that considers how personal and collective histories interweave through the aspects of cultural heritage that sustain life – from objects to food, stories and rituals – and how they can be used as a form of resistance.

The Hunterian will work with Glasgow-based artist **Cathy Wilkes** on a new body of work. The project will allow Wilkes an extended period of reflection on questions of war, conflict and violence. Wilkes' work encompasses both abstraction and intense social realism to convey themes of universal relevance: attachment, care, loss, separation, exposure, and revelation.

Turner Prize 2022 nominee **Heather Phillipson** will propose a vision from the skies inspired by the US government's 2021 report into UAPs (Unidentified Aerial Phenomena) for her commission at **Glynn Vivian Art Gallery**. Her work, often involving collisions of wildly different imagery, materials, and media, will consider various sites of conflict, from the microcosmic to the global.

Central to each of these ambitious works will be the opportunity to bring art to audiences in new and relevant ways by connecting people, places and experiences of conflict and its resolution. **Ulster University's** commission will respond to the 25th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement in 2023, working in Derry-Londonderry with French acrobatic and circus arts collective **Compagnie XY** and in partnership with Northern Ireland's contemporary circus companies – **In Your Space** and **Circusful** – world leaders in using circus to bring communities together, championing citizens' physical and spiritual resilience in overcoming obstacles and sustaining a collaborative peace. Similarly, **Leicester Museums**, whose commissioned artist is to be revealed later this year, will reflect on Leicester's role as a City of Sanctuary with a significant public artwork inspired by the stories of local individuals affected by the upheaval and displacement caused by conflict.

Two additional commissions at IWM sites will each receive £250,000 and extend IWM's rich art offer. Details of the commissions will be announced later this year.

Alongside the five major partner and two IWM commissions, 15 member organisations from IWM's **War and Conflict [Subject Specialist Network](#)** will receive smaller grants of £20,000. Comprising universities, galleries, local authorities and social enterprises, eight have now been selected, including: **Bishop Grosseteste University** in Lincoln; **Gateways to the First World War** at the University of Kent; arts and heritage social enterprise **Our Big Picture**; Nottinghamshire-based charitable community benefit society **Inspire: Culture, Learning and Libraries**; **Believe in Me CIC**, a social enterprise specialising in South Asian histories and education; **PARC (Photography and the Archive Research Centre)** at London College of Communication, University of the Arts London; **Visualising War** at the University of St Andrews; and **Swansea University**. Working alongside both established and emerging artists, their commissions will explore conflict from the First World War to the present day. Today, a second phase inviting expressions of interest opens for the seven remaining places.

This ambitious reinvestment in the arts sector builds on over 100 years of art commissioning by IWM, which since the First World War has worked with artists to record the experiences of conflict for its collections. The IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund also extends the vision and reach of 14-18 NOW which, during the First World War centenary, engaged 35 million people, worked with 420 artists from 40 countries and staged projects in 220 locations across the UK, with 600 partner arts and heritage organisations.

Artist Michael Rakowitz, says: *"In recent years, I have tried to make art that interrogates the intersections between empire, war, and museums in ways that resonate locally and globally. My work, commissioned by BALTIC and Imperial War Museums, will invite viewers to reconsider the relationships between hospitality and hostility, provenance and expropriation, and to confront the complicity of cultural institutions and audiences in geopolitical matters".*

Diane Lees, Director-General of IWM, says: *"IWM is delighted to be working in close partnership with such a breadth of UK organisations on this ambitious programme of art commissioning. After a challenging couple of years for the arts sector, we hope that the unprecedented opportunities enabled by the IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund will kick-start cultural dialogue as we recover from the wide-reaching impacts of COVID-19".*

Jenny Waldman, formerly Director of 14-18 NOW and now Director of Art Fund, says: “Over half the UK population engaged with the 14-18 NOW programme of extraordinary arts commissions, demonstrating the power of art to engage new audiences and open up conversations about war and conflict. Thanks to the generosity of Peter Jackson, whose film *They Shall Not Grow Old* was a highlight of the programme, the 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund will build on this vision and reach, bringing exciting opportunities to artists, organisations and communities across the UK.”

Tim Marlow, IWM Trustee and Chair of IWM’s Arts Commissioning Committee, and Director of the Design Museum, says: “Since the First World War, IWM has worked with artists to record the experiences of conflict. It continues to commission new works from contemporary artists, reflecting on conflicts past and present. The impressive roster of artists selected for the 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund builds on this history, fostering collaboration and creativity to interpret conflict in new and thought-provoking ways.”

IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund commissions will go on public display across the UK between 2022 and 2024. The second phase of expression of interest applications opens to members of IWM’s War and Conflict Subject Specialist Network from today until 1 September 2022. To apply and for further information about the IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund, please visit our [website](#).

Ends

For further press information and interview requests please contact:

Hannah Carr, Communications Manager (Exhibitions and Programming), HCarr@iwm.org.uk, 07581 622 157

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

Notes to editors

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IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund

The IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund is a national programme of 22 artist commissions inspired by the heritage of conflict and created in partnership with Imperial War Museums (IWM) and 14-18 NOW, the official UK arts programme for the First World War centenary.

To mark the end of the First World War centenary, Imperial War Museums and 14-18 NOW worked together to co-commission the critically acclaimed film ***They Shall Not Grow Old*** by Academy Award winner Peter Jackson, which was seen by nearly 5 million people globally. Following the unprecedented success of the film, 14-18 NOW and IWM agreed that a share of the film’s royalties would be used to support a new programme of artist commissions, the IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund. A total of £2.5 million is being made available to artists and cultural organisations across the UK.

Through the IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund, IWM is now working in partnership with 20 cultural organisations from across the UK to commission 22 ambitious new artworks inspired by the heritage of conflict and created by world-leading and emerging contemporary artists. These new commissions will forge new opportunities for artistic engagement, bring art to audiences in new and relevant ways by connecting people, places and experiences, and kick-start cultural dialogue as we recover from the wide-reaching impacts of COVID-19. The commissions will go on public display across the UK between 2022 and 2024.

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/partnerships/subject-specialist-network/14-18-now-legacy-fund>

IWM

www.iwm.org.uk

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 has recently transformed with new, permanent and free Second World War and The Holocaust Galleries; **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**.

14-18 NOW

14-18 NOW was a programme of extraordinary arts experiences connecting people with the First World War, as part of the UK's official centenary commemorations between 2014 and 2018. It commissioned new work by leading contemporary artists across all art forms; the programme included over 420 artists from 40 countries, taking place in more than 220 locations across the UK. 35 million people experienced the programme, including 8 million children and young people. 14-18 NOW won many awards for its work.

14-18 NOW was supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England, by the DCMS, and with additional funding from The Backstage Trust, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Clore Duffield Foundation, British Council, NatWest and support from individuals.