



Caro Howell MBE appointed as new Director-General of Imperial War Museums

Today, the Board of Trustees of Imperial War Museums (IWM) has announced the appointment of Caro Howell MBE as IWM's new Director-General. Caro will take over from current Director-General, Dame Diane Lees on 1 May 2023. Dame Diane Lees will remain in post until the end of March next year.

Caro is currently the Director of The Foundling Museum and has over 20 years' experience in museum leadership roles. She has widespread expertise in gallery education, audience development and delivering major capital projects. During her time at the Foundling Museum, Caro has grown the organisation, establishing it as one of the UK's leading independent museums, and building on its mission to transform the wellbeing and life chances of young people through the power of the arts.

As the former Head of Education & Public Events at the Whitechapel Gallery, Caro oversaw the development of major new education spaces and project galleries. As part of Tate Modern's set-up team, Caro formulated its audience development strategy and developed London's first peer-led museum programme for 15–23-year-olds.

Caro Co-Chairs the Women Leaders in Museums Network and is an advisor to several museums and arts organisations. Earlier this year, Caro was awarded an MBE for services to museums.

The recruitment of Imperial War Museums' new Director-General was guided by IWM's Board of Trustees, with the formal appointment made by the Prime Minister, The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP. The interview panel consisted of Trustees and external representatives from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and the museums and heritage sector.

Caro Howell MBE said: "I feel very honoured to be asked by the Trustees of IWM to become the new Director-General. Under Dame Diane Lees' leadership, IWM has transformed the ways in which conflict and its impact are explored. IWM is unparalleled in its ability to trace complex ideas across centuries and continents, held in stories, objects and emotions that speak to us all. Like the Foundling Museum, stories are at IWM's heart. At a time when the war in Ukraine is impacting the lives of millions around the world, IWM's mission could not be more vital. I look forward to developing its reputation for reaching new audiences across all its sites, through bold, inclusive and global storytelling."

Matthew Westerman, Chair of IWM's Board of Trustees said: "I am delighted that Caro has accepted the position of Imperial War Museums' Director-General. Caro has significant experience in museum leadership and has a proven track-record in developing and delivering organisational vision and mission, as well as successfully leading on major capital projects. I believe Caro is the ideal candidate to build on Diane's fantastic work and to lead IWM as we grow into the future. The Board of Trustees and I look forward to working with

Caro to deliver our strategic objectives, and to realise our mission to develop and communicate a deeper understanding of the causes, course and consequences of war.”

Culture Secretary Michelle Donelan said: "I congratulate Caro Howell on her appointment. She brings a wealth of experience to the role and is well placed to continue Diane Lees' excellent legacy. We look forward to working with her and supporting the important work of this public institution."

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For further press information and interview requests please contact:

Rhodri Cole, Communications Manager (Corporate), rcole@iwm.org.uk / 07734 993 571

Notes to editors

Biography of Caro Howell MBE

Caro Howell has been Director of the Foundling Museum since 2011. Under her leadership, the Foundling Museum has established itself as one of the UK's leading independent museums, bringing its remarkable 300-year-old story of creative philanthropy to life, through a dynamic programme of exhibitions, contemporary commissions by artists, and award-winning programmes with care-leavers and in Early Years. In recognition of this work, HRH The Princess of Wales became the Foundling Museum's Royal Patron in 2019. In May 2022, the Museum won the Museum & Heritage Awards Learning Programme of the Year for Tracing Our Tales, its pioneering training programme for care-leavers, and in November 2022, the Museum was awarded NPO status by Arts Council England.

Caro has been responsible for the Museum acquiring a number of major works, including *Trumpet Boy*, (2010) by Yinka Shonibare CBE and *Tricycle*, (2016) by Michael Craig-Martin. She has devised and championed a series of research-based exhibitions and projects designed to highlight underrepresented aspects of the Museum's historic story.

Previously, Head of Education & Public Events at the Whitechapel Gallery, London (2005-11), she oversaw the construction and programming of major learning spaces, project galleries and initiatives, as part of the Gallery's £13m expansion into the former Whitechapel Library. She was at Tate for ten years, joining Tate Modern's set-up team in 1997. As Curator for Youth & Special Projects, she formulated its access and audience development strategy, and developed London's first peer-led museum programme for young adults. While at Tate Modern she developed a number of award-winning resources for disabled people, including *i-Map* (2002), the UK's first online art resource for blind and partially sighted people, which received a BAFTA, and *i-Map: The Everyday Transformed* (2006) which received a Jodi Award.

She Co-Chairs the Women Leaders in Museums Network, is a Trustee and Chair of the Learning & Engagement Committee of the Holburne Museum, Bath, an advisor to The Charterhouse, Two Temple Place and the Huguenot Museum, and a mentor for Arts Emergency. She has been a member of Art on the Underground's Advisory Group (2006- 2011) and a trustee of the experimental theatre company Shunt (1998-2010). She has an MA, History of Art from Birkbeck College, University of London (1994) and a BA, Theatre Studies from Warwick University (1988).

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**.