

Imperial War Museums expanding £2.5m art commissioning programme with nine new partners



- **A further nine arts organisations from across all four nations of the UK each receive £20,000 from the IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund to commission a new work of art inspired by the heritage of conflict**

Nine new art commissions that tackle subjects ranging from rebuilding after the Second World War to reconciliation in the aftermath of the Troubles in Northern Ireland will receive a share of £180,000 from Imperial War Museums' (IWM) art commissioning programme.

Funded with a share of the royalties from Peter Jackson's critically acclaimed film *They Shall Not Grow Old*, the new commissions take various forms including original brass band compositions, large scale street art and film installations.

The IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund is a national partnership programme of over 20 ambitious artist commissions inspired by the heritage of conflict. The programme continues the vision and reach of 14-18 NOW, the official UK arts programme for the First World War Centenary, by reinvesting a share of royalties from Peter Jackson's film – a centrepiece of IWM and 14-18 NOW's Centenary commemorations.

Today, IWM is pleased to reveal details of the nine new partners selected to join this ambitious art commissioning programme, building on over 100 years of contemporary art commissioning by the museum.

The nine organisations, selected by IWM through a competitive and open round of expressions of interest, are: **Bentley Priory Museum** in Stanmore, **The Box** in Plymouth, **The Brickworks Museum** in Burlesdon, **Ffotogallery** in Cardiff, **Freedom Festival Arts Trust** in Hull, **The Harris Museum** in Preston, **Nerve Centre** in Derry-Londonderry, **Sweet Patootee Arts** based in London, and **The Unicorn Preservation Society** in Dundee. Working alongside both established and emerging artists, their commissions will explore conflict from the First World War to the present day.

- **Nerve Centre** will work with artist Joe Caslin and young people from across Northern Ireland to create a large-scale street art installation. Including an augmented reality component, this commission will respond to the Good Friday Agreement and reconciliation in the aftermath of conflict.
- At their annual festival in Hull, the **Freedom Festival Arts Trust** will present a multi-media installation from artist Lee Karen Stow and The Freedom Women Collective, an artist

collective of women who have survived war, conflict and persecution. The artists will weave contemporary stories from Ethiopia, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Sudan using visual and textile art, sculpture, performance, poetry and photography.

- **The Unicorn Preservation Society** has commissioned composer Michael Betteridge to create a new piece of collaborative community music to be played on HMS Unicorn, one of the oldest ships in the world. Based on the experience of Unicorn's crew members who were sent to the Western Front, Gallipoli and the Balkans, the composition will be performed on HMS Unicorn's own restored brass band instruments from the First World War.
- **Bentley Priory Museum** will bring a contemporary artist into dialogue with women from the Royal Air Force and their lives and experiences. **The Box** will explore the idea of home through the lens of the Falklands conflict. **Sweet Patootee Arts** will produce an immersive film installation inspired by the often-neglected heritage of the British Caribbean in the Second World War. **Ffotogallery** will explore the forceful expulsion of people from the Chagos Islands and themes of uprooting and relocation. **The Harris Museum's** series of murals known as the 'Egyptian Balcony' commissioned in 1908 will serve as inspiration for a commission on shared histories of conflict between Preston and Egypt. **The Brickworks Museum** commission will focus on the rebuilding of Southampton following the Second World War.

These nine organisations are all part of IWM's War and Conflict Subject Specialist Network (WCSSN) and join a diverse existing cohort of partners from across the UK, including several other WCSSN members and five major partners. The next year will see the delivery of major commissions from world leading contemporary artists including Michael Rakowitz, Cathy Wilkes and 2022 Turner Prize Nominee Heather Phillipson. Contemporary circus troupe Compagnie XY's commission with Ulster University has partially launched and will return to Derry-Londonderry this August Bank Holiday Weekend for their final performance **After the Rain**.



To date, four commissions have been completed. Currently on display at Kirkcaldy Galleries is **Somewhere to Stay**, commissioned in partnership with the University of St. Andrews, an exhibition by artist Diana Forster that details her mother's journey as a Polish refugee during the Second World War. Commissioned in partnership with Our Big Picture, **Friends, Foes and Good Companions**, a reportage exhibition inspired by oral histories of the Cod Wars by artist Olivier Kugler and writer Andrew Humphreys, has recently opened at the Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre.

Rebecca Newell, Head of Art for Imperial War Museums says, "*The IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund builds on Imperial War Museums' rich and longstanding history of commissioning art. One year into this programme, we are delighted by the diversity of exceptional arts experiences that have been created and shared with audiences. We look forward to expanding this work with artists, organisations and communities across the UK, continuing to highlight stories of conflict in engaging and creative ways.*"

Jenny Waldman, formerly Director of 14-18 NOW and now Director of Art Fund, says: *The 14-18 NOW programme of arts commissions brought stories of the First World War to over half the UK population in extraordinary and creative ways. The IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund continues to*

harness the power of art to engage new audiences with the complexities of conflict. I am inspired by the range of themes and artforms to be explored in these nine new commissions and across the programme.”

The IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund commissions forge new opportunities for artistic engagement and bring art to audiences in new and relevant ways. The commissions go on public display across the UK between 2023 and 2025. 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:

Lula Rappoport, Communications and Marketing Officer (IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund)
lrappoport@iwm.org.uk

Notes to editors

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Commission Information

After the Rain

Compagnie XY

[Derry-Londonderry City Centre](#)

27-28 August

Somewhere to Stay

Diana Forster

[Kirkcaldy Galleries](#) 4 February 2023 – 15 May 2023

[University of St. Andrews' Wardlaw Museum](#) 28 May 2023 – 7 January 2024

Friends, Foes and Good Companions

Olivier Kugler and Andrew Humphreys

[Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre](#) 28 April – 20 August 2023

IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund

The IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund is a national partnership programme of over 20 artist commissions inspired by the heritage of conflict. Led by Imperial War Museums, the IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund was created following the success of 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 cultural organisations from across the UK to commission over 20 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 from 2022.

<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 Department of Media, Culture and Sport, and with additional funding from The Backstage Trust, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Clore Duffield Foundation, British Council, NatWest and support from individuals.