



**Immediate Release**

## **Albert Adams (1929-2006)**

**30 June 2012 onwards**

**A display of newly acquired artworks by critically acclaimed South African born Expressionist, Albert Adams, will go on show at IWM London this summer.**

Adams' works are a powerful and profound response to contemporary conflict, drawing on a life shaped by political and social challenges. Adams' lifelong passion for justice and world affairs is evident in this significant body of work, which draws on themes such as the Holocaust and Abu Ghraib and Darfur atrocities.

Albert Adams was born in racially-segregated South Africa, coming to Britain in 1953 to take up a place at the Slade School of Art in London. He later studied in Rome, Munich and Salzburg, where he took guidance from the Austrian painter Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980).

In an artistic career spanning almost 50 years, Adams's work centred on both his personal struggles and on discord in the wider world. His work maintained its uncompromising and disturbing power until his death in 2006, as seen in his last completed painting, *Abu Ghraib*. This painting was inspired by images and news reports of abuse perpetrated in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq in 2004. It avoids clichéd repetition of the images which became shorthand for the atrocity; and instead engages wider themes of incarceration and violence, delivering a visceral and despairing indictment of human cruelty.

Also on display, a series of etchings Adams created between 2001 and 2004 that address specific conflicts, such as Darfur and the Iraq War. Like the painting, they also meditate upon universal themes of human suffering and the artist's own personal demons. The allegorical narrative, featuring ape and skeleton figures, injects sinister and absurd overtones, inviting comparison with the *Caprichos* and *Disasters of War* etchings by Spanish artist Francisco Goya (1746–1828).

This recent acquisition is a highly significant addition to the IWM Art Collection and one which presents a unique and powerful commentary on past political and social injustices around the world.

– Ends –

**For further press information and interview opportunities please contact the Press Office: Nina Smetek [nsmetek@iwm.org.uk](mailto:nsmetek@iwm.org.uk) 0207 091 3069 / Bryony Phillips [bphillips@iwm.org.uk](mailto:bphillips@iwm.org.uk) 0207 416 5316**

## Notes to Editors

### IWM London

IWM London is IWM's flagship branch thanks to the breadth, depth and impact of our exhibits and displays. We share people's experiences of war through our First World War and Second World War galleries, the Holocaust Exhibition, the Lord Ashcroft Gallery, as well as many other displays and temporary exhibitions. Our family learning sessions and events encourage debate and challenge people's perceptions of war.

Open daily from 10am – 6pm except 24, 25 and 26 December. Last admission 5.45pm  
IWM London, Lambeth Road, London, SE1 6HZ. T: 020 7416 5000

### IWM

IWM (Imperial War Museums) tells the story of people who have lived, fought and died in conflicts involving Britain and the Commonwealth since 1914.

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 are **IWM London**, with six floors of exhibitions and displays; **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 war-time airfield; **Churchill War Rooms**, housed in Churchill's secret headquarters below Whitehall and the Second World War cruiser **HMS Belfast**.

**2014 - 2018** marks the centenary of the First World War, a landmark anniversary for Britain and the world. IWM will mark the centenary by leading a vibrant, four year programme of cultural activities across the country, including the opening of brand new First World War galleries at IWM London in 2014. For more information visit [www.1914.org](http://www.1914.org)