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This report by Josephine Burns summarises 14-18 NOW’s five-year programme and tells the story of a unique undertaking that brought together art and heritage with a vision ‘to support the creation of artworks by contemporary artists, to engage and stimulate the UK public in fresh and engaging ways that will lead to new perspectives on the First World War and its resonance today.’ Conceived by the UK government as part of a wider programme to mark the centenary, 14-18 NOW centred on three key moments: August 2014 (Anniversary of the Declaration of War), July 2016 (the Battle of the Somme), and the Armistice in November 2018.

The overview captures the experiences of those involved and the main points from the extensive evaluations, distilling the findings and setting out the story of this five-year programme - its purpose, how it was done, what was achieved, what significant changes resulted, and what will remain and might happen in the future. Behind these headlines is a wealth of documentation and data analysis undertaken by independent evaluators Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, along with inputs from artists, the views of participants and partners, reflections and information from the 14-18 NOW Board and team, and illustrated by reference to many of the artworks; details of all these are available at www.1418now.org.uk.

The conjoining of contemporary arts with heritage is not new but the scale and ambition of this undertaking was ground-breaking. The vision depended on forging connections between heritage - its rich historical knowledge and collections - with the imaginations of the artists to make vital the memory of that time in our history and its many consequences. The decision taken by 14-18 NOW’s Board and Executive to realise this vision through the commissioning of new work was not without its risks and challenges - only when a new artwork is complete and shown is its value and success realised. That the programme engaged so many people and organisations across the UK and beyond, and at the same time won considerable critical acclaim, is a remarkable success story.

Over the three seasons the programme encompassed 107 commissions which produced 269 new artworks in more than 220 locations across the UK from the Outer Hebrides to Cornwall; it reached 35 million people through the work of 420 artists from 40 countries, and was delivered with the support of 580 arts, heritage and community partners.

"From the poetry of Siegfried Sassoon to the paintings of Paul Nash, art has provided a prism through which generations have seen the First World War. 100 years later, 14-18 NOW invited contemporary artists to forge fresh connections with the war and the period 1914-18. The artists’ responses were bold and revealing, engaging large numbers of people across the UK in extraordinary arts experiences and creating fresh perspectives on the lasting impact of a conflict that changed the world.” Jenny Waldman, Director 14-18 NOW
These Rooms – ANU and CoisCéim Dance Theatre. Photo Hugo Glendinning
DEEPENING UNDERSTANDINGS

The marking of such a moment must be personal and universal; one hundred years from the First World War the challenge was to make these histories relevant across time and generations, geographies and cultures, to engage and inform – a complement to ceremonies of the church, state and military, allowing people to discover, experience and mark the centenary on their own terms.

The scale and ambition of 14-18 NOW’s programme set an inspirational standard on how the arts can widen and deepen understandings of the conflict using heritage, archives and museum collections as the artists’ inspiration for the commissioning and presentation of serious, high quality work.

We’re here because we’re here was witnessed live in 52 locations across the UK by an estimated two million people. The work reached an additional 28 million through broadcast (in partnership with the BBC), print and social media, and in total was experienced by 63% of the UK population.

WORLD CLASS ARTISTS AND ARTWORKS

The impact and reputation of the programme depended on the quality of the commissions – it was this that encouraged involvement from artists and organisations and was crucial to achieving the vision. The response of critics was echoed by positive peer group regard from both emerging and established artists and this, along with the inventive nature of the artworks, afforded significant benefits to artists’ practice, with some confident it had enhanced their reputation and profile.

The artworks embraced and indeed brought together (often with technology) nine artforms, including 21 music projects, 13 films and 9 literature projects.

Many of the programme’s projects have been nominated for and received awards, including the BAFTAs, National Lottery Awards, Museums and Heritage awards and Creative Review.
ART INTERPRETS HERITAGE

Using the lens of contemporary art commissions to illuminate the history and heritage of that time brought together the strengths of both sectors. Professionals from heritage and the arts along with audiences and volunteers reached a new accord about how to tell stories and interpret history – one with the other achieved a new synergy and introduced the arts audience to heritage and vice versa.

Showcasing the heritage of the First World War in museums alongside art houses and cultural programmes increased the cross-over between the two worlds: *Five Telegrams*, an artwork combining music and large-scale projections opened both the 2018 BBC Proms and the 2018 Edinburgh International Festival, the first time these two distinguished organisations have worked together.

Tangible and intangible heritage were explored in *I Say Nothing* – the hidden, dark histories of a selection of First World War-related objects in Glasgow Museums’ collection that initially appeared to be related to healing and saving lives.

FROM INTIMATE TO EPIC

Of the 107 projects, 61% were free to access. While large-scale, pan-UK artworks such as the *Poppies* on tour and *We're here because we're here* had particularly high impact (numbers, press, social and media coverage, etc.), other commissions – both outdoor and in venues – that related to more intimate local histories had an equally strong resonance. *Iolaire* mixed new Gaelic music, archive recordings and visuals to tell how, when transporting troops home after the war, the ship sank at the entrance to Stornoway Harbour and 201 servicemen perished.

DEBATE, DISCUSSION AND DISCOURSE

Directly and indirectly, the programme engaged many voices in public discourse on its themes and in the artworks themselves, bringing not only 1914-1918 into new focus but war and conflict in general. The programme created discussion and debate on social media, and provided engaging content for young people to explore in schools and colleges.

All the artworks were rooted in and grew out of research partnerships – creative conversations - between the artists and knowledge provided by historians and curators.

Sometimes a wider public debate just happened - through the excitement and curiosity generated by the artworks - at other times it was strategic: notably, the learning and engagement programme which sought to promote open-ended dialogue and debate, equipping teachers to have braver conversations with pupils and students.
REACH AND GROWTH: HOW 14-18 NOW GREW

THE PEOPLE WHO CAME...

35 million people across the UK over the five years of the centenary engaged with the programme - three times the original target of 10 million. Among these were 4.3 million children under 16 and 3.7 million young people aged 16-24. The tour of the Poppies alone attracted 4.6 million visitors to the 19 locations across the UK.

The number of family and intergenerational visits was particularly remarkable - 27% of visitors to Pages of the Sea came on a family visit.

They Shall Not Grow Old has so far been seen by 78,000 in UK cinemas and 3.9 million people on BBC2 and iPlayer; 2.7 million of these were new to 14-18 NOW. A data snapshot of the demographic profile for We’re here because we’re here indicated how events of this kind can reach new audiences who do not generally engage with the arts or heritage.
Pages of the Sea – Danny Boyle. Photo Kevin Scott, courtesy Belfast Telegraph
Spectra – Ryoji Ikeda. Part of LIGHTS OUT. Photo Jonathan Perugia
HOW THE PROGRAMME GREW AND SPREAD ACROSS THE UK

At the outset, there was some doubt about whether this initiative could engage and unite across the land. LIGHTS OUT was an early indicator of success when one night, one hundred years on from the Declaration of War, more than 16 million people around the UK turned off their lights for an hour in a remarkable act of collective reflection.

As the three seasons evolved, the geographical reach extended and all nations and regions of the UK hosted projects. The success of the first season encouraged greater interest from partners and artists, growing the programme further and wider, as demonstrated by data on Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, where the volume of activity increased in each season from eight projects in 2014 to 27 in 2016 and 31 in 2018.

OF PLACES AND GEOGRAPHIES

War and conflict and their aftermath are complicated, often sensitive subjects. A century on, issues remain and the echoes carry down the years. 14-18 NOW’s programme did not shrink from addressing many of these more problematic areas of place and contested history. Across and In-Between, investigated how the Irish border frames identity and intervenes in the routine of everyday life - co-created with residents exploring the complexities of visible and invisible borders.

ART IN PUBLIC SPACES

The programme demonstrated the considerable potential for drawing people into the public domain to share the live experience - in particular for large-scale free projects. In the transformation of the known – the landscapes, cityscapes and buildings – and the discovery of the unknown or the forgotten, the artworks illuminated new connections.

‘The first reveal of the cinematic backdrop of a real field is something which will stay with me for years. It’s easy to see why the Telegraph’s Dominic Cavendish has called Mametz, “the finest commemoration of the First World War centenary I’ve seen to date.” It is also National Theatre Wales’s finest work to date.’ Arts Council Wales

Many of the projects found a new audience too; of those who saw Mametz, almost one half (47%) had never seen a National Theatre Wales show before.

The locations for the tour of Poppies were largely heritage sites and the result in many cases was a new or rekindling of interest and appreciation:

‘I’m so pleased it’s come here to Middleport Pottery, because it’s just such a brilliant site. I wish more people knew about it, because I think it’s a bit of a hidden gem.’ Visitor to Weeping Window at Middleport Pottery

1 - 3
4 - 6
7 - 9
10 - 12
13+

SCOT
YORKS
EM
EAST
LONG
SW
WALES
EM

11 | Reach and Growth
Communications, Digital and Social Media

A number of projects incorporated digital and social media in their delivery, helping to raise awareness. Reporting and sharing by the public on social media was integral to the artistic vision for *We’re here because we’re here*, the sudden surprise nature of the event adding to its impact. This demanded a new kind of partnership between artistic and communications staff and the result has been widely recognised as a hugely successful and innovative campaign. The coordination of multiple partners working locally alongside a national team made possible the live streaming broadcasts on social media, allowing millions to experience the events.

The digital content strategy for *Pages of the Sea* brought the beach portraits to life for millions around the world. Online ambassadors and influencers further increased reach and engaged new audiences. The 2018 programme generated 19,620 items of coverage with 900,000 people visiting the 14-18 NOW websites, and activity on Twitter generated 3.5 billion impressions.

International Reach

While the programme had a UK focus, there was also a global outlook involving 67 partners from countries across six continents and artworks by 110 international artists. Projects toured to venues including New York, Berlin, Paris, Cape Town, Adelaide, Trinidad, Athens, Shanghai and Auckland, further spreading the reach, and people from over 200 countries visited the 14-18 NOW website. Peter Jackson’s film *They Shall Not Grow Old* has had significant international exposure, including screenings in all USA states and further screenings planned in more than 2000 locations.
LEARNING PROGRAMME

The education programme was shaped as a catalyst for young people’s critical thinking - to promote an emotional and moral engagement with the world. Overall, 14–18 NOW’s programme reached 4.3 million children aged under 16 and 3.7 million young people aged 16-24\(^1\) with 51,723 of these directly involved in activities and a wider audience of 790,185 children, young people and teachers who were engaged across seven learning projects. The Poppies tour alone engaged 12,605 beneficiaries in the accompanying learning programme.

The learning offer sowed seeds for subsequent areas of work, from teachers’ CPD to new curricular opportunities; projects with particular impact included LIGHTS OUT and Letter To An Unknown Soldier in 2014, the UK-wide Poppies tour to 19 locations from 2015 to 2018, Incredible Journeys in 2016, They Shall Not Grow Old and Pages of the Sea in the final season.

In the first season, Letter To An Unknown Soldier set the pace and engaged over 500 primary and secondary schools, with school-age children contributing approximately 15,000 of the 21,439 letters.

‘… in school the opportunities for collective commemoration are limited and it was such a unique opportunity to come together and remember.’ Teacher

IN THE CLASSROOM

Learning opportunities linked to the artworks matched with the National Curricula for England, Northern Ireland and Wales and Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland.

Cross-curricular toolkits were developed to support both the Poppies tour and six more 14–18 NOW commissions. Lesson plans for 9 – 13 years olds were used as a springboard into exploring themes alongside the value of using art to promote a rich response in the classroom across Literacy, Art and Design, and History. The Pages of the Sea BBC Live Lesson was viewed by 29,000, one of the highest ever recorded.

POST 16 AND TERTIARY

There was an impressive involvement of young people in the programme, both formally and informally, an estimated 3.7 million of those aged 16–24 of whom 1.4 million took part in LIGHTS OUT.

Within formal education, UAL with Chelsea College of Art and Design delivered a programme for Dazzle Ships – inspired and created by 18+ students, both in New York with Parson’s School and in London, operating an ‘exchange’ of work with the artist Ciara Phillips. The UAL awarding body is currently rolling out Make Art Not War as a study option for their Diplomas to 44,000 students across 213 schools and colleges; further curriculum resources continue through autumn 2019 for A Level English, Art & Design, and Geography.

VOLUNTEERS

The programme mobilised 6,600 volunteers in the development and presentation of the artworks as well as in supporting roles, representing a contribution of 137,000 hours; 2,000 people took part in We’re here because we’re here including 1,421 as soldiers. Overall, 3,700 had not previously been involved in volunteering. It was a rich learning experience for many and there is evidence that it stimulated interest in further research including for example, war memorials, National Archives, and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Heritage organisations reported a surge of interest in volunteering:

‘The high profile and publicly loved nature of the Poppies helped us bring in new volunteer recruits and encourage greater engagement with the museum or greater time commitment from existing volunteers.’ Poppies tour presenting organisation
Many volunteers reported that involvement had developed their social networks, and provided opportunities to meet different people and form new friendships.

**INFORMAL LEARNING AND SHARING**

A striking outcome of many of the events was the appeal to families with high levels of intergenerational engagement, sharing stories and histories across time and place; in 2018 across six locations, the Poppies tour attracted 324k family visits, and *Pages of the Sea* saw 27% of almost 100,000 visitors to the beaches in family groups with children under the age of 16.

Projects that drew extensively from local communities to recruit participants created a connection to ‘place’ and a deeper knowledge of that time. 100 community groups across the UK worked with artists to create banners for display in *PROCESSIONS*.

*Pages of the Sea* achieved extensive community engagement through workshops and drop-in sessions, engaging more than 7,000 people across the UK. Ten of its 18 beach locations in England were in areas with lower than average levels of arts engagement.

“It’s an event that’s drawn people together in a way that a standard cenotaph or church ceremony would not have done.”

Attender, *Pages of the Sea*, Formby
THE HERITAGE SECTOR

The strong working relationship formed between 14-18 NOW and its key partner Imperial War Museums was at the heart of the initiative. Close involvement with one of the main funding partners, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, built exponentially over the five years as the success of the programme grew.

Networking with museums and galleries was significant both for artists’ research and development as well in supporting the presentation of artworks in locations across the UK. Moreover, an increasing confidence in and enthusiasm for the programme brought in new partners and promoted connections with local communities who were galvanised to shine light on their own heritage. Part of the Lakes Alive Festival, in partnership with the Lake District National Park, Flight captured the beauty, power and drama of flight in all its forms, paying particular tribute to Cumbria, a region rich in aviation history.

Other heritage bodies including the National Trust, the Forestry Commission and English Heritage were encouraged by the quality of the programme and its artists; the Forestry Commission, originally established to restore the UK’s strategic timber reserve after the First World War, collaborated on the commissioning of Nissen Hut which referenced the history of the use of Nissen huts during the First World War and in the labour camps created to support the planting of Dalby Forest, the location of the sculpture.

ARTS ORGANISATIONS

As well as connecting arts with heritage, a range of partnerships were struck across artforms and arts organisations. First time partnerships were formed by three national theatres that worked together on We’re here because we’re here, while Tate Liverpool, Liverpool Biennial and Mersey Maritime Museum collaborated on Dazzle Ship Liverpool. Pages of the Sea brought together a series of partners including the Coastal Cultural Network and for the same project, National Theatre Scotland collaborated with Shetland Arts on the St Ninian’s Isle Beach on the south of the main island.

Collaborations across disciplines flowered with, for example visual artists working with theatres, and composers working with digital designers.

The involvement of major institutions and festivals – directly and through the support of the commissioning partners – brought together a wide-range of new partnerships including a first-time collaboration between the BBC Proms and the Edinburgh International Festival.

LOCAL PLAYERS AND INTERESTS

The programme depended on local players and organisations operating through a UK-wide radial structure of hubs that could recruit people, and manage and present the events. From local authorities to museums, community groups to arts groups, this web bound together the programme. In all there were 580 partners of which 513 were UK-based, many of these working together for the first time, finding common cause in a shared endeavour. Leap of Faith at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, part of The Coffin Jump, connected a group of 30 vulnerable women in a new partnership with health agencies (NHS), voluntary social sector partners and local authorities to deliver the project.

The power of local people coming together to take part in mass participation events worked at both a local and global scale, revealing and healing and thrilling.

“So many of these works have managed to do more than just simply commemorate in an empty way, more than memorialise. It’s not the past as a museum piece, it’s the past as the present. The past as a place of emotion, depth and despair. All of these works manage to do that – to be works of deep empathy,” Ekow Eshun - writer and broadcaster
Poppies: Weeping Window by artist Paul Cummins and Designer Tom Piper at Caernarfon Castle. Photo Ffion Reynolds. From the installation ‘Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red’ – poppies and original concept by artist Paul Cummins and installation designed by Tom Piper – by Paul Cummins Ceramics Limited in conjunction with Historic Royal Palaces, originally at HM Tower of London 2014.
The programme attracted funding from almost 20 partners ranging from large corporates such as Bloomberg (through Bloomberg Philanthropies) and NatWest to trusts and foundations such as Backstage Trust, the Clore Duffield Foundation and Jerwood Charitable Foundation. In addition, more than 50 individuals pledged support to the commissions.

14-18 NOW developed and maintained excellent working relationships with the DCMS team overseeing the UK’s centenary programme, and with the First World War Centenary Committees overseeing the commemorations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. These relationships were essential to ensuring that 14-18 NOW’s programme aligned with and added real value to all the other commemorative programmes during the centenary period.

There was a range of prestigious international co-commissioners from across the world, including Park Avenue Armory New York, the Ruhr Triennale, the Salzburg Festival, Adelaide and Brisbane Festivals, and the Holland Festival.

14-18 NOW attracted support from a number of international government bodies including the French Institute, the Mission Centenaire de la Premiere Guerre Mondiale, the Goethe Institute and the German Embassy, as well as from the Scottish and Welsh Governments.
NEW WAYS OF TELLING OLD STORIES

14-18 NOW’s programme reinvented and reimagined the act of commemoration. Commissions by the wide range of artists, who used heritage resources in creative, innovative ways, gave people throughout the UK familiar and unfamiliar perspectives on the First World War. Connections with the local, the national and the global impacts of war created bonds across time and space, mediated between communities and diverse experiences, linked the personal and the universal, reinvented new stories for future generations.

Over 16 million people took part in LIGHTS OUT\(^i\).

‘My main reason for coming is my daughter - she saw it from miles away and she insisted, she’s nine years old, and she insisted that she be brought here - she will not forget this for her entire life.’ Attender, LIGHTS OUT, Spectra London

They Shall Not Grow Old used state of the art technologies to transform original Imperial War Museums’ archive footage to startling effect:

(what was) ‘remarkable about the film was the way the technology was used … to reach into the past and pull it in the 21st century, and make it so relatable from a human perspective.’ Cinema audience member

We’re here because we’re here transformed the experience of art – of how it is made and how it reaches an audience. The artist, Jeremy Deller, conceived the work from the outset as depending on the public’s desire to share their encounter with the ‘soldiers’ on social media, thus deliberately handing over control. Many theatre makers saw this approach as breaking new ground in their understanding of the potential of social media.

HIDDEN HISTORIES

Over 40% of 14-18 NOW projects shifted the focus away from a predominantly male, military perspective by providing new narratives about the conflict. These included the role of animals such as those which were the focus of Fly by Night reflecting the history of the more than 100,000 military pigeons which were used to carry messages between distant personnel, changing the course of battles and saving dozens of lives.

Other pieces were explorations of the everyday. In Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the immersive installation Great and Tiny War looked at women on the homefront and the impact of conflicts, historical and contemporary, on the mental health of whole families through the generations.

INVENTIONS OF WAR

Surprising inventions and the technological developments of First World War were revealed.

The early use of radio communications in the war was charted in Radio Relay – Past Frequencies, a history that began in the Easter Rising in 1916 when Irish rebels seized a wireless telegraphy station to make the world’s first pirate radio broadcast to announce Ireland’s independence; months later, the same technology was an essential tool at the Battle of the Somme.

In Leeds, The Body Extended reflected on the development of prosthetics to address physical injuries inflicted by mechanised warfare - without precedent in human history - which demanded new ways of thinking about disability and beauty.

The contribution of artists to the development of camouflage was made vivid through the Dazzle Ships series where five contemporary artists transformed real-life ships in the UK and USA, inspired by the innovative naval camouflage developed in 1917.

Homage was paid to the many artists as documenters of the conflict, and the music, literature and art inspired by the war. 1914: Goodbye to All That brought together work by 10 writers from the countries involved in the First World War to respond to the title of Robert Graves’ famous book, taking the poignant title phrase as a starting point for a
personal reflection on the aftermath of war, as well as on the continuing struggle for artistic freedom in the face of conflict in all its forms.

UNTOLD STORIES OF A GLOBAL WAR

A number of projects focused on often-overlooked and contested histories and particularly the contribution of soldiers from across the Empire.

The involvement of Africa was explored through Mimesis: African Soldier and The Head and the Load that told the story of the millions of African soldiers, porters and carriers who were involved in the First World War, people whose shattered and lost lives were regarded as expendable.

The Indian sub-continent’s involvement was explored in Dr Blighty, which told the story of the more than one million men who travelled from India to fight and how the wounded found themselves hospitalised in Brighton’s Royal Pavilion.

Xenos distilled and reflected on the wartime experience of an Indian soldier in an epic solo dance piece.

Unwritten Poems invited poets from across the Caribbean diaspora to tell the story of the 15,600 Caribbean men who fought alongside the British army in the First World War, conjuring up their experiences and thoughts in poetry unwritten at the time.
WOMEN’S WAR

Women both on the homefront and on the frontline played essential roles in the war and as a consequence their lives changed forever. Women everywhere have inherited that legacy. *The Coffin Jump* blended sculpture, soundtrack and performance in homage to the all-female First Aid Nursing Yeomanry. *Fashion and Freedom* looked at how wartime changed women’s lives and examined the conflict’s fashion legacy for the 21st century.

With new skills and freedoms came confidence to address the inequalities that had hampered women for so long. The war changed the political landscape; *Sylvia*, a modern musical, was based on the extraordinary Pankhurst family who were at the heart of the suffrage movement.

The first statue of a woman to be installed in Parliament Square is of the great campaigner for women’s rights, Millicent Fawcett, and alongside, inscribed on the plinth, the names and portraits of 58 women and men who campaigned for women’s suffrage.

Emancipation was celebrated through one of the largest participation projects of the programme, *PROCESSIONS*, when one Sunday in June 2018 the streets of the UK’s four political capitals were filled with tens of thousands of women and girls wearing the colours of the suffragette movement and carrying the banners commissioned from 100 women artists who worked with organisations and communities including women with lived experience of the criminal justice system, members of the LGBTQI+ community, survivors of abuse, women living with dementia, and many others.

CASUALTIES AND SURVIVAL

When two million newly disabled British ex-servicemen returned from the First World War, society’s attitudes to disability had to change. *Does it Matter?* was a series of short films where five contemporary disabled artists presented unorthodox, irreverent and unexpected takes on the legacies of war and disability in Britain today. *This is Not For You* paid tribute to Britain’s wounded war veterans, men and women, and their fight for respect and remembrance.

*Charlie Ward*, an immersive sound installation, placed audiences in the heart of a makeshift wartime hospital where the unlikely therapy of Chaplin’s films brought solace and comfort to those injured on the battlefield.
COURAGE CALLS TO COURAGE EVERYWHERE
SOCIAL IMPACTS

The programme’s different approach to memorialising won widespread approval despite some initial scepticism – overall, 76% of the population felt that the programme with its arts-led commissions was ‘a good idea’ with only 5% seeing it as ‘a bad idea’.

The demographic profile for the large-scale public art projects was broader than that of ‘typical’ arts or heritage audience and significantly closer to the profile of the UK population with 308k visitors from areas of low arts engagement.

There is evidence that the programme helped to bridge social – generational and cultural – divides; 20% of the population who took part in any way came from socio-economic groups C2, D and E. The report by British Future, Crossing Divides, examines these issues in detail.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS AND LEVERAGE

Some data sources suggest how the programme performed in economic terms. Media coverage increased significantly as the seasons progressed, with the annual media value increasing from just under £10 million Advertising Value Equivalent in 2014 to £73 million in 2018.

Memories of August 1914 presented by Culture Liverpool attracted over a quarter of a million visits from outside Liverpool generating £24 million revenue for the city. The Poppies tour 2018 visitor data shows that £716,000 was spent onsite on catering, £912,000 was spent onsite on retail with an estimated £50m spend to the six host towns and cities; there is some further evidence of visitor numbers being maintained in the locations following the Poppies visit. The heritage ‘dividend’ was furthe...
We’re here because we’re here – Jeremy Deller and Rufus Norris. Photo Eion Carey
Five Telegrams – Anna Meredith and 59 Productions. Photo Justin Sutcliffe, courtesy 59 Productions Ltd
NEW FORMS OF REMEMBRANCE

14-18 NOW created a programme rooted in the melding of art and heritage that has redefined the act of commemoration. The three high points over the five years provided for in-between quiet times – breathing space in which to think, discuss and plan. The benefits of this long-span arc were significant, allowing time to learn and to build the partnerships that were integral.

There is no doubt that the programme stimulated interest in the history and heritage of the First World War, locally and nationally. 14-18 NOW asked open questions – there was no received narrative, only a desire to allow artists and people to explore this event of a century ago. Recognition of its success continues and may well determine a different approach to such events in future years.

‘The approach to these commemorations was unique – whether the display of thousands of ceramic poppies at the Tower of London, or Danny Boyle’s Pages of the Sea with images of soldiers who never returned being washed away on beaches. Seeing the face of poet Wilfred Owen being slowly erased by the tide at Folkestone is something that I’ll never forget.’ Chair of the DCMS Committee, Damian Collins MP.

ONGOING PROGRAMME

Many of the commissions are still active, continuing to reach new audiences and stimulating interest in the history and heritage of that time. These include Flow Separation, the Dazzle ship in New York, and Mimesis: African Soldier which will be shown in Nottingham in autumn, 2019. Publications will continue to be available including Black Dog and Traces of the Great War.

Seven commissions are currently touring or planned in the next months, including performances of Everything that happened and would happen in Germany and Russia, and a UK tour of Poet in da Corner. Further USA screenings of They Shall Not Grow Old are planned as well the DVD release.

The three-dimensional works such as the statue of Millicent Fawcett and the Nissen Hut will continue in perpetuity and many of 14-18 NOW’s artworks will continue to reach audiences in the years to come.

Arts and heritage organisations, inspired by their experiences, will harness the potential of collaboration between the two fields and the appreciation of artists’ ability to create widely shared experiences will lead to greater readiness to invite their contributions.

The powerful experiences of audiences and participants will stay with them, memories treasured and shared, and the wider understanding of the nature of the war will continue to inform our shared view of the world we live in.
14-18 NOW has garnered a rich archive for future reference and study. This includes:

- The letters from *Letter to an Unknown Soldier* in the British Library as a heritage resource for future social historians, drawing parallels with the Mass Observation Diaries of the Second World War.
- The research and information that underpinned and informed *We're here because we're here*.
- 14-18 NOW’s records, including documentation on all the projects.
- A wealth of qualitative and quantitative data and evaluation as an evidence base and enquiry for future research.

The 14-18 NOW book is a visual record of the overall programme complemented by essays from historians, commentators and artists involved.

The resources for schools and for wider studies of young people remain valuable and active as teaching and learning tools about the First World War and more widely.

**ROLE OF GOVERNANCE AND EXECUTIVE**

The success of 14-18 NOW was driven by strong leadership with a clear sense of mission - initiated by government, established independently and hosted within a major trusted institution.

The independent arm’s length structure was critical in helping 14-18 NOW build trust, particularly with artists; the chairman and its board worked effectively with the executive, supported by a small group of artistic advisers.

It displayed all the best qualities of a learning organisation, eager and able to take criticism and adapt appropriately. Experiences in the 2014 season resulted in changes and subsequent seasons had a more established and larger programming and production team, with longer lead-in times for artists and participating organisations.

The structure, experience and skills of the team - leadership with a flexible and facilitating approach - is frequently commended in evaluations both by commissioned artists and by partners. Agencies and freelancers with specific skills supported the core team as and when needed.

14-18 NOW is a valuable model for the future. The DCMS Committee particularly commended the sensitive approach and ‘tone’ that allowed even the most difficult and sensitive contentions to be addressed and included in the programme.

**NEXT TIME...**

14-18 NOW achieved so much through this programme. The ambition was bold, it took risks and achieved extraordinary success. After such an intense and extensive programme, what happens next? This question was asked in the DCMS Select Committee inquiry into “how successful it has been to use arts and community projects over more traditional ways of commemorating significant national anniversaries, and what lessons we can draw from that.” As well as oral evidence, the Committee has received 115 submissions which will be produced as a single document, available for future study.

When next there is such an enterprise, some notes for future reference: there needs to be sufficient planning time before the onset of the programme particularly regarding the commissioning process and building relationships with artists and partners.

Over the five years, the rise of digital and social media presented new challenges as well as opportunities - for marketing, for engaging people in learning, and indeed for the creation of as well as access to the artworks. Future programmes might use these platforms - in whatever form they may be at the time - more deftly to promote the profile of the smaller, more local projects, and as a means of offering more context and information to enhance knowledge around the commissions.
Poppies: Weeping Window by artist Paul Cummins and Designer Tom Piper at Orkney. Photo Ellie Kurtz
AND FINALLY

The 14-18 NOW model of co-commissioning artworks – large and small – across the UK offers a valuable model for future important moments of reflection, regionally, nationally or internationally. The leadership and dispersed partnership structures are vital to ensuring reach not only across geographies but also across cultures and identities.

This remarkable programme has demonstrated how imagination and purpose work together, how history is stitched into our present and how the artists’ pursuit of the making of meaning helps us to remember and learn, to build connections across time and cultures, and to feel wonder.

“I think people ought to study 14-18 NOW and look very closely at what they’ve done. I can’t think of an event like that, which has been better done and in terms of getting work out, which didn’t compromise at all, but found a hugely popular audience. Genuinely accessible everywhere in the country and also had an emotional point to it that worked.” Tom Sutcliffe – journalist

ii. Data from YouGov plc omnibus survey. Total sample size 2,030 adults. Fieldwork undertaken 4-5 July 2016. The survey was carried out online. Omnibus results were weighted and representative of all UK adults (aged 16+).

iii. Viewing figures supplied by the BBC


vi. Data from TNS omnibus survey with independent calculations by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre. Total sample size of 1,245. Fieldwork undertaken 5-7 August 2014. The survey was carried out online. Omnibus results were weighted and representative of all UK adults (aged 16+).


viii. Data from YouGov Plc omnibus surveys. Total sample size 2120 adults. Fieldwork undertaken 4-5 July 2016. Total sample size 2137 adults. Fieldwork undertaken between 12-13 November 2018. The surveys were carried out online. Omnibus results were weighted and representative of all UK adults (aged 16+).
ABOUT 14-18 NOW

14-18 NOW is the UK’s arts programme for the First World War centenary. Working with arts and heritage partners all across the UK, it commissioned 107 new artworks from leading contemporary artists from all art forms, which were seen by more than 35 million people.

14-18 NOW is supported by the National Lottery through the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England, by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and by additional fundraising.

1418now.org.uk

ABOUT MHM

Morris Hargreaves McIntyre is an international consultancy who work with charities, heritage and cultural organisations of all sizes.

MHM are fascinated by what makes people and organisations tick. Their strategic thinking, insight and creativity transforms how charities, heritage and arts organisations see their world.

Their clients use MHM’s work to connect more people, more deeply, with their causes, fuelling their success.

mhminsight.com

ABOUT JOSEPHINE BURNS

Josephine Burns is a consultant for the arts, culture and the creative economy. For many years, she worked in regional arts development until in 1997 she established BOP Consulting bop.co.uk. BOP is now recognised in the UK and internationally as a leading research and development company all aspects of arts and culture.

Since 2012, Jo has been BOP’s senior associate as well as undertaking freelance work. She is the executive chair of Without Walls.

withoutwalls.uk.com