

ARTSADMIN MEDIA RELEASE

DOES IT MATTER? WW1 SHORTS LAUNCHED ON CHANNEL 4'S 4OD

A new series of short films by five contemporary disabled artists

Nearly two million British men returned from the First World War with a permanent disability. Disabled veterans were among the most visible legacy of the war, and their unprecedented numbers changed the way that the general public, and the state, understood disabilities.

Now in a series of short films commissioned by 14-18 NOW, WW1 Centenary Art Commissions and Channel 4, and produced by Artsadmin and Xenoki, five contemporary disabled artists reflect on the legacies of war and disability in Britain today, taking inspiration from Siegfried Sassoon's 1917 poem, *Does it Matter?*

From a crutch assembled and disassembled like a weapon, to a cast of animated disabled soldiers, to a reflection on the heroic figures depicted on war memorials, the films offer warm, witty and poignant perspectives on war and disability.

The films can be seen at [channel4.com/ww1shorts](https://www.channel4.com/ww1shorts) or via 4OD.

Oh! What a Lovely Lovely Ward by Katherine Araniello turns sentimentality on its head in a playful and absurd reimagining of a wartime hospital, where the wounded and war damaged wait their turn to have their morale lifted by Matron.

In **Soldiering On, Jez Colborne** collaborates with Mind the Gap to explore Jez's fascination with the pomp and ceremony surrounding war and its brutal reality. A music video set in an old cinema, it explores his desire to be part of an experience he's locked out of because "learning-disabled people don't go to war".

Claire Cunningham's Resemblance centres around the act of assembling (and disassembling) a crutch in the manner of a soldier assembling his gun. Claire enacts a ritual that mirrors the act of creating a weapon of destruction, while actually creating an object of support.

In **Breathe Nothing of Slaughter, Tony Heaton** examines the potent symbol of the war memorial against the realities of those disabled by the devastating effects of war. Heroic, enduring, Adonis-like bodies waving flags or in prayerful repose are set in stark contrast to archive images of blackened faces, rotting feet, malnourished and broken bodies.

Simon Mckeown's Ghosts uses motion capture and animation to follow a cast of disabled veterans from across the spectrum of World War One as they prepare for the day ahead. Dressed in the uniforms of various armies, the characters talk, cook and tend to pigeons in a landscape filled with the artefacts and objects of war.

Does it Matter? is produced by Artsadmin and Xenoki. Co-commissioned by Channel 4 and 14-18 NOW, WWI Centenary Art Commissions, supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund. Part of the Unlimited programme.

[#ww1shorts](#)

DATE OF ISSUE 28 July 2014

PRESS ENQUIRIES

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Does it Matter? by Siegfried Sassoon (1917)

Does it matter?—losing your legs?...
For people will always be kind,
And you need not show that you mind
When the others come in after hunting
To gobble their muffins and eggs.

Does it matter ?—losing your sight?...
There's such splendid work for the blind;
And people will always be kind,
As you sit on the terrace remembering
And turning your face to the light.

Do they matter?—those dreams from the pit?...
You can drink and forget and be glad,
And people won't say that you're mad;
For they'll know you've fought for your country
And no one will worry a bit.

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14 -18 NOW, WW1 Centenary Art Commissions

A programme of special commissions by leading artists from Britain and around the world to mark the centenary of the First World War as part of the UK's official centenary commemorations. The programme will centre around three key moments: **4 August 2014** (Anniversary of the Declaration of War), **July 2016** and **November 2018**. The first events will take place from June to August 2014. 14 -18 NOW is supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England and by additional fundraising. 1418now.org.uk

Channel 4 is a publicly-owned, commercially-funded, not-for-profit public service broadcaster and has a remit to be innovative, experimental and distinctive. Its public ownership and not-for-profit status ensure all profit generated by its commercial activity is directly reinvested back into the delivery of its public service remit. As a publisher-broadcaster, Channel 4 is also required to commission UK content from the independent production sector and currently works with over 400 creative companies across the UK every year. In addition to the main Channel 4 service, its portfolio includes: E4, More4, Film4, 4Music, 4seven, channel4.com, video-on-demand service 4oD and standalone digital projects. 4oD is available on a wide range of platforms including: channel4.com; Freesat Freetime, Sky, Virgin Media, BT TV, YouView and NOW TV/Roku boxes; via apps for Windows 8, Windows Phone, iOS and Android devices; and on Sony PS3, Xbox 360, Xbox One and Samsung TV. channel4.com

Artsadmin is a unique producing and presenting organisation for contemporary artists working in theatre, dance, live art, visual arts and mixed media. At its Toynbee Studios home Artsadmin has established a centre for the creation, development and presentation of new work and a space for artists and audiences to experiment. The organisation offers a range of artist development services, including a free advisory service and mentoring schemes, as well as the bursary scheme. Artsadmin is supported using public funding by Arts Council England. artsadmin.co.uk

Xenoki Production was formed in 2006 by Deborah May, Bob Lockyer and Annie McGeoch, who had worked together on many dance and music productions over the years. The company began life producing multi-camera recordings of live shows for Sadler's Wells Theatre – starting with Akram Khan and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui in zero degrees, Sylvie Guillem in Sacred Monsters, and Cherkaoui and the Shaolin Monks in Sutra – and have gone on to work on live shows, promos and documentaries for BBC Television, the National Theatre, Aldeburgh Music, The Cholmondeleys, Siobhan Davies Dance, Michael Clark Company and Rambert Dance, to name but a few. xenoki.co.uk

First World War Centenary Partnership Programme

14-18 NOW is a member of the First World War Centenary Partnership and an independent programme hosted within Imperial War Museums. The First World War Centenary Partnership was established by IWM (Imperial War Museums) in 2010 and to date has over 2,500 members from across 45 countries. The Partnership is presenting a collective programme of activities and events to mark the centenary, developed at grass roots levels. This diverse and far-reaching programme has been developed to reflect how people want to remember, commemorate and debate the conflict in their own communities, in a way that is meaningful for them. 1914.org is the official website for the First World War Centenary Partnership. Throughout the centenary new events and activities will be added each week to the events calendar, produced in partnership with Culture 24. 1914.org

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. Between 2010 and 2015, it will invest £1.9 billion of public money from government and an estimated £1.1 billion from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. artscouncil.org.uk

Heritage Lottery Fund. Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) aims to make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities across the UK and help build a resilient heritage economy. HLF has supported over 36,000 projects with £6bn across the UK. hlf.org.uk