

## 'Children of The Great War' is a dual-screen film and digital media installation by artists Simon Puriņš and Ivan Riches.

The artwork was commissioned by Age Exchange, as part of their wider Heritage Lottery funded project, also entitled 'Children of The Great War'.



Throughout 2013-14, Age Exchange worked across London to record interviews with members of the London public. The focus was on how families were affected by the conflict then, and across subsequent generations. People shared immensely moving personal histories, passed down from within their family. Age Exchange worked in partnership with many fine organisations across London to carry out open days, recording 127 interviews, as well as digitalising 5300 personal letters, photographs and period artefacts, brought by interviewees to the activity. This unparalleled collection of Londoners' family First World War histories will rest with the international archive Europeana 1914-1918, for the learning of future generations. These personal stories of parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts from across the Home-front, the battlefields, skies and the sea, inspired the installation, as well as a new play.

From the initial 127 interviews, the artists invited participants with different family accounts, with whom to work, on a more intimate level. These participants were asked to personally tell, or relate through younger actors, a particularly emotive story of specific personal value to them. The outcome of this process, forms a 'Portrait' screen of intimate and engaging stories and accounts told by 13 young and older participants, interlaced with imagery from related family photographs, letters and handed-down objects. Projected alongside is a 'Landscape' screen with imagery directly inspired by these 'Portrait' stories; an evocative collage of photographs, documents and objects from the Age Exchange Europeana 1914-1918 collection and 1914-18 film footage from the Imperial War Museum and VAD Archive, subtly entwined with photography and film taken by the artists in the landscape of contemporary Flanders. This 'Landscape' screen also has an original soundtrack composed by Ivan Riches, inspired by the music and poetry of Ivor Gurney.

**NB - As an aid to accessibility, full transcripts of all the stories are available, upon request.**

Further information about the project is available at:

<http://www.childrenofthegreatwar.org.uk>

<http://www.age-exchange.org.uk/what-we-do/arts-projects/great-war/>

<http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en/>

The complete filmed performance of the intergenerational play 'Children of The Great War' is available to view at: <http://youtu.be/bj1J-Cqj6wE> together with a shorter trailer and interviews with cast and crew: [http://youtu.be/ZECbPnaV\\_AY](http://youtu.be/ZECbPnaV_AY)

### About the Artists:

**Ivan Riches** works with digital imagery, film/ video, sound/ music, text and installation, as well as more traditional platforms of drawing and painting. He has had work shown at the BFI and Festival Hall on the Southbank, the ICA and the South London Art Gallery. He has worked in various tutoring roles in schools, universities and museums (including the V&A and Historic Royal Palaces) and with community groups. He has been commissioned as an artist/ filmmaker/ composer for Age UK, BBC, BT, Mayor of London and GE Health Care.

**Simon Puriņš** is a visual artist, filmmaker and artist-educator. He works 'cross-platform', utilising digital arts, film, installation, text, collage, photography, drawing and painting and his work has been shown at BFI and Queen Elizabeth Hall on the Southbank. Since 2003, he has worked on numerous film and participatory arts projects within the community and education sectors. Commissioning partners have included Age Exchange, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, The Children's Society, GE Health Care, London & Quadrant, Southwark Education and Southbank Centre.

More about the artists and their work can be found at:

<http://www.eyesociation.org>

<http://www.ivanriches.org.uk>

