

# Press release: Interactive 'Forever Project' comes to the V&A

Visitors to the V&A display on the UK's new Holocaust Memorial can experience some of the latest technology being used to preserve the stories of British Holocaust Survivors, from today until 18 August.

Using state-of-the-art natural language processing and voice recognition software, The Forever Project will allow visitors to the museum to interact with a digital recording of Steven Frank, a survivor of Nazi persecution, and to ask him questions about what he lived through and why everyone should learn about the Holocaust today.

The Forever Project filmed 10 survivors who are now in their 70s and 80s. On average each survivor answered more than 1,000 questions, which were pre-recorded using ultra high definition 3d filming techniques. When a live audience asks a question, the technology matches this with the responses, enabling the audience to more deeply engage with the Steven's testimony than would be possible with a normal film – preserving the experience of meeting a survivor of the Holocaust.

With the youngest Holocaust survivors now in their 70s, The Forever Project helps to make sure that their voices will still be heard for generations to come. It is led and developed by the National Holocaust Centre and Museum. It will be featured at the V&A in partnership with the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation as part of its ongoing display on the designs for the UK's new Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre. The wider display features shortlisted designs for a new national space for remembrance and an educational experience that will challenge visitors to stand up against all forms of hatred and extremism in the modern world, including the discrimination that underpins Antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism and homophobia today.

Visitors will be able to experience The Forever Project from 14 – 18 August, at 11am or 2pm daily in the Raphael Gallery.

Sarah Coward from the National Holocaust Centre and Museum said:

Meeting a Holocaust survivor in person is a remarkable experience. It has a real impact on young people who need to understand that these horrific events happened in the all-too-recent past. It is wonderful that we have the opportunity at the V&A to give an insight into The Forever Project, which will preserve the experience of meeting a survivor and hearing their testimony for generations to come.

Sir Peter Bazalgette, Chair of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, said:

It is a sad reality that there will come a time when survivors will no longer be able to be with us to tell us their stories. Yet we need to hear these stories now more than ever – to understand what it is that can break society apart and how we can play our part in standing up to hatred, whatever form it may appear in.

One of the first acts of the Foundation was to recommend that government fund this project, which goes to the heart of our mission to support educational partners across the country in their work to preserve and share the stories of the Holocaust.

The Forever Project will be available for visitors to see and interact with at 11am and 2pm daily, from 14 – 18 August.

Visitors to the gallery will also be able to see the designs from ten shortlisted teams for the new Memorial and Learning Centre, to be built next to the Houses of Parliament and give their feedback on which designs they like and why.

## **Background information**

### **1. About The Forever Project**

The Forever Project uses advanced digital technology to enable the National Holocaust Centre and Museum to preserve the experience of meeting Holocaust survivors. The survivors are visualised as life-size 3D laser projections at the Centre, able to both give their testimony and answer the audience's questions. Dozens of survivors could eventually take part in the project should sufficient funds be raised.

The Forever Project was Highly Commended in the Museums and Heritage Awards "Innovation" category 2017, was included in the Nominet Trust's global Top 100 Tech for Good projects, and is a finalist in the National Lottery Awards 2017. The Centre worked with interpretive design company Bright White Ltd on the project, together with software developers d3T, film studio Pollen Studios and the University of Huddersfield.

The project has been made possible through the generous support of funders including Pears Foundation, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Association of Jewish Refugees, the Charles Wolfson Charitable Trust, the R&D Digital Fund for the Arts, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Audrey and Stanley Burton 1960 Charitable Trust, the Foyle Foundation and the Rachel Charitable Trust.

### **2. About the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation Exhibition**

The Forever Project will be featured as part of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation's international design competition exhibition, running until 22nd August. Ten shortlisted design teams are exhibiting, all competing to design the new UK Holocaust Memorial, to be built next to the Houses of Parliament in Westminster by 2021. It will honour the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and all the other victims of Nazi persecution. The Learning Centre

will provide a world-leading educational experience that explains the facts of the Holocaust and challenges visitors to think about their role in standing up to prejudice in society today.

Ninety-two international design and architecture teams, including top global names, competed to design the project. The competition is now entering its final stages, with designs from the ten shortlisted teams displayed for the public to feedback on as part of their visit.

The UK Holocaust Memorial exhibition runs in Raphael Gallery at the V&A until 22 August 2017. Entrance is free and the Museum is open 10.00 – 17.45 daily (10.00 – 22.00 on Fridays). People across the country can have their say on the designs online at: <https://www.gov.uk/holocaustmemorial/feedback>

### **3. About the National Holocaust Centre and Museum**

[www.nationalholocaustcentre.net](http://www.nationalholocaustcentre.net)

The National Holocaust Centre and Museum, based in Nottinghamshire, is the UK's only accredited Museum and Centre dedicated to the remembrance of victims of the Holocaust and to Holocaust education. As well as being a place of memorial, the Centre serves as an educational resource with the aim of teaching future generations about the causes and consequences of genocide.

Established in 1995 by non-Jewish brothers, James and Stephen Smith, the National Holocaust Centre and Museum promotes an understanding of the roots of discrimination and prejudice, and the development of ethical values, leading to a greater understanding within society. It is a global leader in primary education with the field and provides a range of facilities for people of all backgrounds to explore the history and implications of the

### **4. About the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation**

The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation was created to implement the recommendations of the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission report – Britain's Promise to Remember – in 2015, including the delivery of the new Memorial and Learning Centre and the recording of British Holocaust testimony. The Foundation is an advisory board to the Department for Communities and Local Government. It has cross-party political support and is chaired by Sir Peter Bazalgette.