

## **Press Release**

**24 July 2015**

### **Honorary Doctorate for artist behind Tower of London poppy installation**

**The creator of one of the country's most celebrated public art exhibitions is to be honoured by London Metropolitan University**

Paul Cummins MBE, the artist behind the installation of 888,246 ceramic poppies at the Tower of London in 2014, is to be awarded an honorary Doctorate in Philosophy by London Metropolitan University.

More than 4 million people visited Paul's *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* installation, which marked the centenary of the outbreak of World War One.

Paul, from Chesterfield in Derbyshire, returned to education in 2007 as a mature student, having spent his working life as an architectural model maker.

Since graduating in 2010 from the University of Derby, Paul's work has featured in the 2012 Paralympic Games Cultural Olympiad as well as at Chatsworth House, Blenheim Palace and Hardwick Hall.

Paul's installation, 'Candy', was exhibited at the Chelsea Flower Show this summer.

#### **London Met's values**

As well as using education to retrain and expose his artistic talent, Paul overcame adversity, working through his colour associative dyslexia to become one of the foremost figures in ceramic art today.

His journey is an embodiment of what London Metropolitan University stands for; that lives can be transformed through excellent education.

In just five years Paul has become an internationally renowned artist whose work united millions of people. He was recognised in the 2015 New Year's Honours List with an MBE.

He will receive his honorary Doctorate at London's Barbican Centre on Monday 27 July alongside thousands of London Met graduates.

#### **Esteemed company**

Paul is one of six honourees to be celebrated at London Met's summer 2015 graduation ceremonies.

He is joined by individuals from the worlds of science, business, the arts, law, and journalism who too represent incredible achievement and dedication in their fields.

Amol Rajan, Editor of *The Independent* will be awarded an honorary Doctorate of Letters.

Christine Coates, manager of the TUC Collections library until her retirement in 2014, will receive an honorary Doctorate in Philosophy to recognise her 18 years of service to the Trade Unions Collections and the University.

Rob Dickins CBE will receive an honorary Doctorate of Business Administration celebrating over forty years in the music industry working with artists such as Cher, Madonna, Enya and The Sex Pistols.

Shaun Wallace, of ITV's hit show *The Chase*, will become an honorary Doctor of Laws recognising his formidable mind and the impressive legal career.

Professor John Marshall MBE, inventor of the Excimer laser, will receive an honorary Doctorate in Science in recognition of the revolutionary work he has done in developing laser eye surgery and research into ocular health.

London Metropolitan University is proud to welcome such outstanding hearts and minds to its alumni family.

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### **Notes to Editors**

The graduation ceremonies take place on Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 July at the Barbican Centre, London.

Honorary degrees will be issued in the following order:

Monday 27 July: Shaun Wallace, Rob Dickins CBE, Paul Cummins MBE

Tuesday 28 July: Professor John Marshall MBE, Amol Rajan, Christine Coates

Images can be provided following each ceremony.

### **About London Metropolitan University**

London Met has been providing education to people from all backgrounds since 1848, when the Metropolitan Evening Classes for Working Men were established. With over 17,000 students, of which 40% are local, London Met plays a key, socially valuable role in the capital.

The University is home to the 'Super Lab' – one of the largest teaching science laboratories in Europe. Students have access to professional facilities, including Bloomberg suites, a mock courtroom and high spec design workshops. Accelerator –

London Met's specialist business incubator - was named among the Top Five 'Most Active' accelerators in Europe in 2015, highlighting its contribution to London's booming start-up industry.

London Met is home to world-leading academics who regularly give expert comment to the media. The University scored well in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, being ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the country for Area Studies and performing strongly in Education and Social Studies.

The University is strongly focused on employability. In 2015, London Met recorded its highest ever graduate employment score, with 91.1% of all 2013/14 graduates in work or further study six months after graduation.

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