

Artangel

Press Release | 4 August 2014

TOWER OF LIGHT SHINES ABOVE LONDON MARKING THE CENTENARY OF THE OUTBREAK OF WW1

RYOJI IKEDA

spectra

**Victoria Tower Gardens,
Millbank, London SW1P 3JA**

Dusk to dawn, 4 August –11 August 2014

Located in Victoria Tower Gardens, adjacent to the Palace of Westminster, ***spectra*** is a column of intense white light punctuating the London sky from dusk until dawn for seven nights. Created by Japanese artist Ryoji Ikeda, ***spectra*** first appeared in London on 4 August as part of the national commemorations marking the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. ***spectra*** is produced and presented by **Artangel**, and co-commissioned by the Mayor of London and 14-18 NOW, WW1 Centenary Art Commissions.

In tandem with the nationwide LIGHTS OUT initiative that saw businesses and households across the country extinguishing all but one source of light, ***spectra*** appeared in the London sky just before 10pm on 4 August during the course of the evening memorial service at Westminster Abbey.

LIGHTS OUT responds to a remark made by British statesman Viscount Grey on the outbreak of the First World War in 1914:

“the lamps are going out all over Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime”.

The source of ***spectra***'s column of monumental light, visible across London, emanates from 49 high-powered static searchlights installed at Victoria Tower Gardens, adjacent to the River Thames, behind the House of Lords. The work can be experienced throughout London by simply looking up to the sky, but the public are also invited to visit Victoria Tower Gardens and walk within the installation, and experience an accompanying sound composition of pure sine waves. ***spectra*** will finally fade for the last time in London as the sun rises on Monday 11 August.

James Lingwood and Michael Morris, Artangel Co-Directors, said: “***spectra*** is an artwork sculpted in sound and light, a sublime combination of mathematics and architecture. Ryoji Ikeda offers us an open invitation to look and listen and wonder.”

The Mayor of London Boris Johnson said: “The light that ***spectra*** throws up into the night sky is a unifying point. It echoes how the First World War affected all Londoners, but also how they and the rest of the country came together, standing united during those dark days. As we mark the centenary and remember the devastation that the war brought to individuals and communities throughout our nation, this beacon reminds us of their heroism, but also of hope.”

Jenny Waldman, Director of 14-18 NOW said: "This beautiful artwork is a symbol of hope. At this UK-wide moment of commemoration, it is a testament to the endurance of the human spirit in adversity. *spectra* is one of a series of artworks commissioned by 14-18 NOW for each of the UK's four nations. Each work takes different forms of light or candles as their inspiration."

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For further information, interview requests or images, please contact Artangel Head of Communications Anna Larkin at anna@artangel.org.uk / + 44 (0)20 7713 1400 / +44(0)7867 974088 or Nick Chapman at nick@artangel.org.uk.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Press information 4 August

Available for interview: Michael Morris & James Lingwood, Artangel Co-Directors
Nigel Hinds, 14-18 NOW Executive Producer

Visitor Information

Open: 4 August – 11 August 2014

Opening Times: Victoria Tower Gardens will be open 24 hours and *spectra* will be visible at night, between sunset and sunrise

Hours of illumination: *spectra* will appear at dusk (approximately 9pm) and disappear at dawn (approximately 5am) each day

Entry: Entry to Victoria Tower Gardens is FREE but large numbers are expected and capacity will be managed

Address: Victoria Tower Gardens, Millbank, London SW1P 3JA

Public transport: Nearest London Underground stations are Westminster and Pimlico

Public Inquiries: +44(0) 20 7713 1400

info@artangel.org.uk

Online: www.artangel.org.uk/spectra

Disabled access: *spectra* is fully accessible to wheelchair users

RYOJI IKEDA was born in Gifu, Japan in 1966. He lives and works in Paris. Ikeda is a leading electronic composer and visual artist, whose work focuses on the essential characteristics of sound itself and that of visuals as light by means of both mathematical precision and mathematical aesthetics. Ikeda has gained a reputation as one of the few international artists working across both visual and sonic media. He elaborately orchestrates sound, visuals, materials, physical phenomena and mathematical notions into immersive live performances and installations. Alongside pure musical activity, Ikeda has been working on a number of long-term projects including the series 'spectra' since 2001. *spectra* is a large-scale installation employing intense white light as a sculptural material and so transforming public locations in Amsterdam, Paris, Barcelona, Hobart and Nagoya. Ikeda has performed and exhibited internationally including at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; MIT, Boston; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Sónar Festival Barcelona; Tate Modern, London; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; Auditorium Parco della Musica, Roma; ICC, Tokyo; Art Beijing; Göteborg Biennale; Elektra

Festival Montreal; Le Fresnoy, Tourcoing; Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media; Le Laboratoire, Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo; Ikon Gallery, Birmingham; Singapore Art Museum; Crossing the Line Festival, New York; Ars Electronica Center, Linz; Grec Festival, Barcelona; Aichi Triennale, Nagoya; Palazzo Grassi, Venezia; Armory Park Avenue, New York; Barbican Center, London; Museo de Arte, Bogota; Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; Laboral, Gijon; Festival d'Automne, Paris.

His albums +/- (1996), 0°C (1998), matrix (2000), dataplex (2005) and test pattern (2008) - pioneered a new minimal world of electronic music and his work matrix won the Golden Nica Award at Ars Electronica in 2001.

www.ryojiikedastudio.com

ARTANGEL commissions and produces exceptional projects by outstanding contemporary artists. Over the past two decades, Artangel projects have materialised in a wide range of different sites and situations and in countless forms of media, from film and video to sculpture and sound installations. Artangel has generated some of the most talked-about and contentious art of recent times, including work by Francis Alÿs, Clio Barnard, Matthew Barney, Jeremy Deller, Douglas Gordon, Roger Hiorns, Roni Horn, Mike Kelley, Michael Landy, Steve McQueen, Susan Philipsz, Gregor Schneider, Daniel Silver, Rachel Whiteread and Robert Wilson.

Artangel is generously supported by Arts Council England and the private patronage of the Artangel International Circle, Special Angels and The Company of Angels.

www.artangel.org.uk

VICTORIA TOWER GARDENS is a public park located on the north bank of the River Thames and as its name suggests, is adjacent to Victoria Tower on the south-west corner of the Palace of Westminster and extends to Lambeth Bridge. The park was first created in the 1870s by civil engineer Sir Joseph Bazalgette during his works on central London's first sewer network. The gardens are managed by The Royal Parks and contain a cast of the sculpture *The Burghers of Calais* by Rodin, currently on loan to Compton Verney, a statue of suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst by A.G. Walker and the 1865 *Buxton Memorial Fountain* by architect Samuel Sanders Teulon, commissioned to commemorate the emancipation of slaves in 1834.

www.royalparks.org.uk

14-18 NOW, WW1 Centenary Art Commissions, is 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 centres around three key moments: **4 August 2014** (anniversary of the Declaration of War), **July 2016** (start of the Battle of the Somme) and **November 2018** (centenary of the Armistice). 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.

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Technical partner: Skylight (Paris)
Production partner: Unusual (UK)

Co-produced by Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) in Hobart (AU), Sharjah Art Foundation (UAE) and Ryoji Ikeda Studio (Paris)

Originally commissioned by Dream Amsterdam Foundation and Forma, 2008

With thanks to the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation and Gallery Koyanagi (Tokyo).

