

NEWS RELEASE

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Acclaimed artist Wolfgang Buttress announced as designer of UK's first national memorial to journalists killed in conflict

The winning design for the UK's first national memorial to journalists killed while reporting from conflict zones has been unveiled. At an event hosted by Bloomberg, internationally acclaimed artist Wolfgang Buttress was announced as the artist who will create a permanent artwork at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, with a companion piece at St Bride's Church, Fleet Street.

Chosen through a Royal Society of Sculptors' national design competition, which attracted 104 entries, Buttress's proposal *End of Copy | Words of Light*, unveiled by Chris Elmore MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, FCDO, will commemorate British and UK-based journalists and media workers killed while bearing witness to conflict. It will be accompanied by an online public record chronicling their lives and work. Together, the memorial and digital archive will honour sacrifice, preserve memory and educate future generations about the cost of truth.

Wolfgang Buttress is internationally recognised for artworks that explore the relationship between people, place and nature, often at moments of collective reflection. His winning design was praised by a highly experienced judging panel for its emotional intelligence, restraint and enduring relevance, and for inviting contemplation without spectacle. The panel included Maria Balshaw, outgoing Tate director, public sculpture expert Mark Richards FRSS and founder of On The Record, Andrew Baud.

Speaking after the announcement, Wolfgang Buttress said: "This memorial is about presence rather than proclamation. Journalism at its best is an act of service, often quiet, frequently risky and, in the most tragic cases, fatal. My ambition was to create a work that acknowledges loss while leaving space for reflection, humility and care. It is a memorial shaped as much by what is felt as what is seen."

End of Copy | Words of Light draws on two historic newsroom signoffs: "###" and "-30-", reframing them as symbols that mark both an ending and the beginning of truth's journey into public view. These four symbols are extruded into aluminium columns that define the form of the memorial. Conceived as rays of light, the columns are arranged in a Fibonacci spiral, creating an immersive space that functions both as a beacon and a place of quiet reflection. Polished stainless steel and cast glass surfaces will mirror the surrounding landscape, while the aluminium is designed to weather naturally over time, reinforcing the memorial's connection to the passage of time.

On The Record was launched in 2024 to address the lack of a permanent UK memorial to journalists killed in the line of duty, despite the country's long tradition of war reporting and press freedom. Since its public launch, the initiative has brought together families, journalists and media organisations.

Sarah Sands, Chair of Trustees of On The Record, said: "This memorial to journalists covering conflicts, together with the online archive, will ensure that their names and work will not be lost to the news cycle. It is a lasting statement that the truth matters, and we will remember the courage and sacrifice of those who died for it."

For families who have lost loved ones, the memorial is intended to offer recognition and solace. Karola Zakrzewska, whose brother Pierre was killed while reporting for Fox News in Ukraine, said: "When a journalist is killed, the story often moves on quickly, but grief doesn't. On The Record matters because it says publicly and unequivocally that these lives, and this work, will not be forgotten. Knowing that my brother will be remembered alongside others who believed in telling the truth means more than I can easily put into words."

The partnership with St Bride's Church will create a tangible link between the national memorial and the spiritual and working home long associated with journalism. James Irving, Head of Fundraising at St Bride's, said: "Journalism and faith share a belief in truth telling, witness and moral courage. St Bride's has been connected to printers and journalists, of all faiths and none, for centuries, and we are honoured to partner with On The Record in creating a place within the church that reflects that shared heritage while speaking powerfully to the present."

The project is supported by a steering group of senior journalists and media figures, in partnership with Press Gazette. The memorial is expected to be installed at the National Memorial Arboretum once fundraising and permissions are complete, while the proposed online record will be created and then continue to grow as families contribute stories, images and testimony.

Contact

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Notes to editors

Further details about the memorial can be found at www.ontherecordmemorial.co.uk.
For information about Wolfgang Buttress see: www.wolfgangbuttress.com.

A selection of images is available here: <https://we.tl/t-wQ4wzvsJ7m2KwJr9>

On The Record is a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with a mission to raise £1m to fulfil its objectives.