

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE: IN FLANDERS MUSEUM, IEPER, WEST FLANDERS, BELGIUM

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

New Zealand/ Belgium : WWI

More than 250,000 servicemen of the “British Empire” lost their lives in WWI in Belgium. More than 4,700 were New Zealanders. During WWI, the New Zealand Division was diverted to the Western Front in April 1916. New Zealand soldiers fought in many battles including the Battle of the Somme in France in September 1916, and the third Battle of Ypres in 1917 and the fourth battle of Ypres in 1918 in Belgium.

While New Zealand soldiers had many successes, notably the Battle of Messines in June 1917, the worst day for New Zealand was 12 October 1917 during the Third Battle of Ypres when 845 died during part of the battle of Passchendaele. 2,700 were wounded.

New Zealand/West Flanders relationship

New Zealand has a very warm relationship with the people of West Flanders based on the historic bonds that were formed by New Zealand’s involvement in WWI. The sacrifices made by New Zealand soldiers, and other allied soldiers, during WWI continue to be remembered. Every year ANZAC Day commemorations are held in West Flanders. New Zealand and Australia attend commemorations separately in Mesen and Zonnebeke respectively and then meet for a joint commemoration in Ieper.

In Flanders Fields Museum, Ieper

www.inflandersfields.be

Cloth Hall, Market Place, Ieper

The In Flanders Fields Museum opened in April 1998 and 200,000 visitors visit each year.

The In Flanders Fields museum is a war museum with a message of peace. It is a modern, living museum, which offers numerous perspectives, both chronologically and thematically. The main story of the war experience is told by the individual men and women who - fought and died in their hundreds of thousands at Ypres during the Great War. Personal booths allow each visitor to follow the real life experiences of an individual caught up in the war. Interactive booths allow further exploration of many subjects. Historical booths and object booths reveal interesting additional information on specific events and objects. Sound effects and audiovisual evocations of *No Man’s Land* assail the senses

and emotions. Scale models and objects, weapons and equipment render the war painfully tangible.

The museum also sees an important role for artists, both artists from the period and contemporary artists. Every year a resident artist offers his or her own unique artistic vision on the phenomenon of War. The idea of granting to an artist the role of a unique witness and the responsibility to express society's reflection on conflict, was inspired by the attitude many of the official war artists adopted during the conflict. (Most countries appointed official war artists. New Zealand had among others Lce.Cpl. Nugent Herman Welch, Capt. George Butler and Capt. A.Pearce). This role was best described by the British war artist Paul Nash, who wrote from Ypres in a letter to his wife: "I am no longer an artist interested and curious, I am a messenger who will bring back the word from the men who are fighting to those who want the war to go on for ever. Feeble, inarticulate will be my message, but it will have a bitter truth, and may it burn their lousy souls." (Paul Nash, Letter, 18 November 1917)

In Flanders Fields Museum's Artist in Residence Programme

The Artist in Residence programme has been running since 1999. To date, all Artists in Residence have created entirely new work. The work should reflect the themes of war and peace, not necessarily WW1, but should be inspired by the place where the exhibit will go – at the centre of the Cloth Hall, underneath the Belfry Tower, and at the heart of one of Europe's leading museums about WW1. (See attached floor plan of the exhibition space). It is a contemporary artistic reflection on war and peace.

Previous artists to participate have been

1999: Val Carman (UK)

2000: Berlinde De Bruyckere (B)

2001: Lieve Van Stappen (B)

2002: Ann-Veronica Janssen (B) & Dora Garcia (ESP) (with Anno 02)

2003: Mark Anstee (UK)

2004: Hans Op de Beeck (B)

2005: Doron Solomons (Israel).

2006: Frans Vercoutere (B), commissioned piece as part of the temporary exhibition The Last Witness.

The works remain the property of the artist. The In Flanders Fields Museum gives publicity to the event and produces in collaboration with the artist a small publication or a catalogue of the exhibition.

The In Flanders Fields Museum enters into a contract with the artist for creating/installing the work and for the residency in leper.

Speaking engagements: if the artist feels like it, speaking engagements with the public (art students) and the press during the residency would be welcomed and supported by the museum.

To help establish a good working relationship, regular meetings between the Curator of the Municipal Museums and the Coordinator of the In Flanders Museum and the Artist should be held.

Publicity: The In Flanders Fields Museum will advertise the Residency widely in the Belgian and international press, and to the public. Expenses for this will be met separately by the museum. New Zealand Press will be asked to give publicity to this event.