

A war-coloured ellipse as a monument for peace in Europe

In order to unite the names of the 600,000 combatants – yesterday's allies or foes – fallen on the battlegrounds of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais during WWI, it was necessary to give a shape to brotherhood, an expression to peace. Thus was born the ring of remembrance on the hill of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette.

Outside, a ribbon of sombre concrete rooted in the soil then suddenly balancing over the void symbolizes the fragility of peace; inside 500 gilded metal panels on which the names are engraved in alphabetical order without distinction of nation, rank or religion.

To celebrate the centenary of World War 1 an international memorial now stands alongside the national necropolis that was erected in the twentieth century. Grief has given way to calm.

To give a shape to brotherhood :

to reunite those who once were enemies and gather together the names of the combatants who fell on the battlefields of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais we chose the figure of the ring.

To give expression to peace :

rooted in the ground for two-thirds of its diameter, the ring detaches itself from the earth where the slope of the hill becomes steeper. This cantilevering is here to remind us that peace will always remain fragile.

To unite art and nature in the service of memory

On the outside, a ribbon of dark concrete, the colour of war, balances on the hill that overlooks the plains of Artois, a horizontal line that traces a 328 metre perimeter. On the inside, the light reflects off 500 sheets of gilded metal on which are written the names of the 579,606 combatants, arranged in alphabetical order without any distinction of nationality, rank or creed, united now and forever in their common humanity. After visiting the gallery, one can rejoin the surrounding countryside by passing underneath the ring that is cantilevered for almost 60 metres.

The monumental and the intimate

Responding to the ambition to make a strong political statement we conceived of this unique work that seeks to overcome the horror of the First World War in order to commemorate its combatants, to constantly remind us of the importance of peace and to offer to Europe a peaceful vision of the future.

