

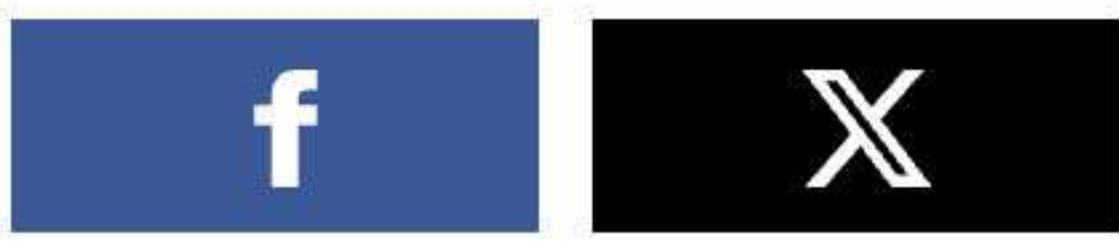


The artist's work was built last week, but it will continue to evolve. © IFFM

Indian artist creates new work in the In Flanders Fields Museum: “Inspired by words of a wounded Sikh”

YPRES Work by the Indian artist Baptist Coelho has been on display in the In Flanders Fields Museum since July 15. He will be an artist in residence at the museum until December 31.

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The sculpture currently on display at IFFM is titled 'Agar is dharti tay koyi jannat hai, o ay hi hai, ay hi hai, ay hi hai' which is Punjabi for 'If there is a paradise on earth, then this is it, then this is it, then this is it'. These are the words that a wounded Sikh wrote home from a hospital in Brighton on January 16, 1915. “After the Indian Army Corps arrived at the front in France and Belgium in October 1914, special hospitals were set up on the British southeast coast for the Indian wounded,” says Dominiek Dendooven of IFFM. “One of these was in the exotic city palace of the Royal Pavillion in Brighton and the adjacent Dome, the same place where 60 years later Abba would win the Eurovision Song Contest. Indian soldiers who had been injured in the mud of the trenches by the industrial violence of war recovered under a gigantic chandelier in an exuberant setting. It is here that the wounded Sikh had these words put on paper. Just like the beautiful propaganda pictures of the hospital in the Dome, they are words that obscure and repress pain and the reality of the war.” Baptist Coelho, born in Mumbai in 1977, was inspired by those words for the work he is now showing in the museum. The sculpture will evolve until December 31 and the artist will continue to make interventions. The man stayed in Ypres for the entire period and he became the first artist to use a studio in Kunstenhuis Satelliet K in Rijselstraat. A public evening is planned in the museum café on Friday, September 2, during which Baptist Coelho will be interviewed by Odile Burluraux from the Musée de l'Art Moderne in Paris.