



Artist Baptist Coelho found shelter in the Kunstenhuis Satelliet.K. in Ypres. © Christophe Maertens

Indian artist Baptist Coelho (45) finds shelter in Satelliet.K.: “I hope to be able to stay here for a while”

YPRES The Kunstenhuis Satelliet.K. in Ypres appears to be a success. The building in Rijselstraat, which was only recently opened, has already housed 5 artists. One of them is the Indian artist Bpatist Coelho, this year’s artist in residence at IFFM. “Ypres gives me a certain peace and I can work there at ease.”

Christophe Maertens 11-10-22, 4:35 PM



This summer, [Kunstenhuis Satelliet.K.](#) , an initiative of the city council to give artists more opportunities in the Cat City, opened in the Rijselstraat in Ypres. “The project was housed in the building where the thrift store used to be, just next to the chapel of the Bellegodshuis,” says Alderman of Culture Valentijn Despeghe (Vooruit). “We converted 10 spaces into studios that we rent out. Currently, 5 studios have already been rented. We can speak of a success. Early next year, another American artist will join us and stay for 1 to 2 months. A very nice dynamic has developed in the street with the various galleries that have been housed there. A 4th gallery will open in the street at the end of this month.”

Paris

One of the first artists to find a home in the arts house was none other than Baptist Coelho, the Indian artist who this year is *artist in residence* at the In Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres. Coelho created [an installation](#) that focuses on the experience of Indian soldiers in Europe during the First World War. The work can be seen until December 31. In the meantime, Baptist Coelho was one of the first artists to find shelter in Satelliet.K. “Normally the project of an *artist in residence* in Ypres ends with the presentation of the work, but I hoped to be able to linger in Ypres,” says the Indian artist. “Initially this proved difficult because there was no place where I could set up a studio. Until the city suddenly with Satelliet.K. came up. I simply moved my studio in Paris, where I stayed until recently, here.”

Soldiers

“Ypres was actually known to me for some time,” says the artist. “The city caught my attention in 2016 after I came into contact with an Indian historian who saw my work in London. That man introduced me to Dominiek Dendooven from the In Flanders Fields Museum. I got to know the museum through Dominiek.” Baptist also conducted research into an Indian soldier in Brighton. “It turned out that that soldier had also been in Ypres. Then I knew for sure that I had to do something in that city.”



The work of Baptist Coelho in the IFFM. © IFFM

In his work, Baptist Coelho gives meaning to psychological and physical injuries caused by the war. His themes are conflict, war, conscription, commemoration, heroism, emotion, fear, healing, the body and gender. The artist still lives in India, but the last 15 years of his life he traveled all over Europe. “It’s been a year since I was home. I did projects in Switzerland, the UK, in Germany, in the Netherlands. I always look for a place where I can work and make that my base. Until recently that was Paris, but now it is Ypres. The location where I stay must have a connection with my work. In Ypres, for example, these are the Indian soldiers who stayed here during WWI.”

Bit scared

“What immediately struck me in the city was the silence. Dominiek said that an area on the street side of this building might be a bit noisy. Noisy? Some cars pass by. You really can’t compare it to my home country. It’s really noisy there. Ypres gives me a certain peace and I can work there at ease. However, I must honestly admit that it took some getting used to the silence when I came to Europe for the first time. It even scared me a little. Now the silence is a luxury. When I go back to my country, I have to make the click in my head.”

However, Baptist did not yet see much of the city of Ypres. “I focus very hard on my work and then limit my walks from my sleeping place to my work studio and to the museum. It might be time to visit other places in the city. In any case, I hope to be able to stay in Ypres a little longer.”