31/01/2018

In Flanders Fields

297 x 420 mm

Aquarelle and soft pastels

In Flanders Fields

The painting was created using aquarelle and soft pastels. Just as the title suggests, the painting's subject are the fields of Flanders, which were permeated with poppy flowers after the First World War. The painting was inspired by the poem of the same name, In Flanders Fields, writen by the Canadian military doctor and artillery commander Major John McCrae. Vibrant red flowers caught his attention during the the days of early May 1915 when he found himself with his artillery brigade near to the Ypres-Yser canal. He noticed how poppies sprung up in the disturbed ground of the burials. The poem was composed following the death of a close friend at that time. The first lines oft he poem have become some of the most famous lines written in relation to the First World War.

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

The weather began to warm up the countryside in the spring of 1915 after the cold winter at war in 1914-1915. In Belgian Flanders, region around Ypres, months of April and May were abnormaly warm. Farmers were cultivating their fields close up to the front lines of the battle and new life started to grow. Some of the most common plants that began to grow in clusters around and on the battle zones were corn or red field poppies. Red field poppy is an annual plant which flowers each year from May to August. If the ground where it's seeds are laying dormant is disturbed, seeds will germinate and poppies will grow. This is what happened during the years of the war in parts of the front lines in Belgium. The ground was disturbed by the fighting and poppies began to grow almost everywhere. The poppy came to represent the immesurable sacrifices made by soldiers and quickly became a lasting memorial to those who died in the First World War. Today, the poppy is a symbol of Remembrance and hope, a blooming symbol of a bloody conflict that changed the world forever. That is the reason why poppy flower was chosen as a motif of the painting. It is made in memory of hundreds of thousands of soldiers who breathed their last on soil laid bare and churned up by mechanichs of war.