

visions
du reel
2019

OFF WORLD & VRT-CANVAS PRESENT

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

A FILM BY ANNABEL VERBEKE

THE VARIOUS FACES OF THE THE FIRST WORLD REMEMBRANCE IN FLANDERS FIELDS

TAGS:

FILM DOCUMENTARY EMOTION HISTORY HUMOR POETRY

EVER SINCE 1919, THE DAILY LIFE IN YPRES, CAPITAL OF FLANDERS FIELDS, HAS BEEN DEDICATED TO COMMEMORATING THE FIRST WORLD WAR. ON HER JOURNEY THROUGH THIS LANDSCAPE OF REMEMBRANCE, FILMMAKER ANNABEL VERBEKE ENCOUNTERS THE MOST DIVERSE AND SOMETIMES CONTRADICTIONARY WAYS OF COMMEMORATING.

GENRE	DOCUMENTARY FILM
LENGTE	60 MINUTES (58 MINUTES WITHOUT IDENTS & WITH CREDITS ON IMAGE)
TAAL	ENGLISH, DUTCH, GERMAN SPOKEN ENGLISH SUBTITLES
TECHNISCHE DETAILS	HD 16:9 STEREO DCP - DIGITAL FILE
WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY	ANNABEL VERBEKE
DOP	THOMAS SZACKA-MARIER, TIELE MULIER, LIEVEN DECAPMAKER
EDITED BY	ANNA SAYCHENKO
SOUND EDIT	PIETER DEWEIRDT
SOUND MIX	GEDEON DEPAUW

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM IS AN OFF WORLD PRODUCTION, IN COPRODUCTION WITH VRT-CANVAS
WITH THE SUPPORT FROM THE FLANDERS AUDIOVISUAL FUND (VAF|FILM)
AND THE BELGIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TAX SHELTER

CONTACT DETAILS FOR SCREENERS, INFORMATIONS, INTERVIEWS

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INSTAGRAM.COM/WWRT_FILM/



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SYNOPSIS

There was hardly a house still standing in Belgium's Westhoek once WWI had reached its end and Ypres and its surroundings had pretty much been wiped off the map.

The idea was pitched to leave the city as it was and not rebuild it so that it would serve as a poignant reminder of the terrible war, but in the end Ypres was given war reparations to rise from its dust and rubble as a symbol of rebirth amidst the piles of discarded ammunition and the graveyards replete with fallen soldiers. It is definitely a place of reflection: how many sacrificed their lives for their country? How horrible was the war? And how valuable and delicate is peace?

The Last Post has resounded every evening ever since 1928. In and amongst the devastation at first, but today surrounded by the wonderful city centre with all the facilities a tourist could wish for, including souvenir shops, hotels, terraces for a drink or a snack, while the wider surroundings can be explored on organised bus trips, by bike or even by helicopter for those whose tastes are a little more exclusive.

The last WWI veteran might have died, but the traces the war left on the landscape are eagerly maintained. So is today's Ypres the unequivocal peace-keeper in the west or do other motives play a role in this?

Made by Annabel Verbeke who grew up in Ypres and has witnessed how diverse and intense remembering can really be day after day, *We Will Remember Them* explores the concept of remembrance from a completely different perspective. The number of visitors and tourists to the region keeps growing every year, unsurprisingly reaching record highs between 2014 and 2018.

In 2017, for instance, the Westhoek welcomed about 515,000 so-called 'remembrance tourists', as regional knowledge centre Westtoer terms them. It is precisely that which has attracted Annabel's critical gaze, because however much we should cherish peace and however noble it is to reflect on those who laid down their lives so their fellow countrymen and women could live in peace, has Ypres itself not become the victim of its own success? Has it not morphed into some kind of 'Remembrance Disneyland', trampled on and groped by the roving feet and hands of the droves of remembrance tourists? Has the remembrance landscape not become one big well-trodden tourist trail?

Naturally, everything to do with remembering WWI contributes a fair bit to the local economy. Or in other words, remembering has become an economic activity that should not be underestimated and which no-one in or around Ypres is able to escape. Tourists are welcomed in style, graveyards are immaculate, the Last Post is played every evening with minute precision, and in and amongst it all, scores of volunteers, supporters and enthusiasts have turned remembering into what it is today: at times dazzling, sometimes candid, but first and foremost very layered and diverse.



DIRECTORS STATEMENT

*“Remembrance says more about those who do the remembering than about those who are remembered”
(Jay Winter)*

I was born and raised in Ypres, a city that seems to have been destined to become the Great War memorial for the rest of its days. Between 1914 and 1918, the area was completely destroyed as more than half a million young men laid down their lives.

Every single day since I was a child, I have been confronted with remembrance. Indeed, every school year, there was the obligatory visit to the In Flanders Fields Museum, the many cemeteries, and of course the Menin Gate where we closed the day listening to the Last Post. Then, as a teenager and student, I learned more about the growing tourism industry, working on the Great Market selling souvenirs and chocolate.

Judging by historical maps of the city, Ypres was rebuilt flawlessly into the appealing tourist attraction it is today. People throng to the region to relive the war, admiring the perfect symmetry of the cemeteries dotted around the area, visiting the museums, sometimes even looking for (distant) relatives. Indeed, everyone seems to have been sucked into a collective mourning process of some kind. But all these visitors also love to enjoy the many local specialities that primarily come in the guise of the souvenirs and chocolate sold in copious amounts. The culture on offer, too, says it all: concerts, photo exhibitions, musicals even, seem to find inspiration in the Great War, securing themselves a prominent place on the cultural calendar so that every target group can surely find something to look forward to. It might seem cruel to many people, but my view of this great drama in human history has been seriously tainted by the constant, industrious activity to do with remembrance. The often perfect, idyllic landscapes surrounding the cemeteries never really prompted me to remember the horror that must have played out back when the men fought here.

When I was 18, I moved to Brussels where I started to look at the region of my birth in a very different way. Remembrance of course comes in many different guises, but what does it mean today for our individual and collective memories? This was a question that only came to me, once I had left the region where I was born. Because distance creates perspective. As I saw the numbers of visitors to the Westhoek grow, I saw the ‘Disneyfication’ of remembrance gradually creep up on it as well, because all those tourists of course need to be shown where it all happened, they have to eat, drink, sleep, find places to relax and shop, and all that noise. And all these needs remain difficult to balance. In other words: where is the boundary between serene remembrance and unashamed commerce; between never forgetting and blatantly advertising?



As my childhood was pretty much saturated by the Great War, I did not think I would ever revisit the subject, but distance also created appreciation, an urge to make a film that would express the ambiguity between my respect for the rich history and current dynamics, and a critical view of the many mechanisms remembrance generates. A film that does not push its opinion on the viewer, but dares to pose almost improper questions only through its direct images and sound.

Why have growing numbers of people from all corners of the world been visiting this tiny 26km-long stretch of land named Flanders Fields in recent years?

Has it become a kind of Mecca of Peace in a world where we close our eyes all too easily for the human suffering and war that are happening as we speak? What do the region, its residents and visitors tell us about our humanity? Is remembrance not more about those who do the remembering rather than about those who are being remembered? Do we feel a need to sanctify the past and mask today's uncertainties?

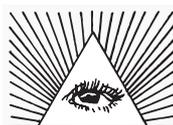
As I travelled through the remembrance landscape with my camera for three years, I saw with amazement, admiration, surprise, incredulity and emotion how the Great War is still very much a part of everyday life.

We Will Remember Them is a personal observation of the fascinating and enormous array of dynamics generated by Great War remembrance.



CREDITS

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY **ANNABEL VERBEKE**
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY **TIELE MULIER**
THOMAS SZACKA-MARIER
LIEVEN DECAPMAKER
ANNABEL VERBEKE
TEUN BROCK
SOUND RECORDING **BRAM DERYCKERE**
MEHDI CHARNI, KOEN DE LEEW
KATLIJNE BELMANS, STIJN D'ALLEEN
THOMAS DOCKX, RUBEN PAUWELS, LUCAS COLLE
SET INTERN **DRIES VAN DEN ENDE**
EDITED BY **ANNA SAVCHENKO**
ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR **PIEN VAN GRINSVEN**
COLOR GRADING **MAXIM VAN DE SOMPELE**
ONLINE EDIT **TARSILA NAKAMURA**
SOUND EDIT **PIETER DEWEIRDT**
SOUND MIX **GEDEON DEPAUW**
MUSIC RECORDINGS **BRAM DERYCKERE**
MUSICIANS **TOM HONDEGHEM (SOPRAANSAX)**
EMMA DECLERCQ (ALTSAX)
ELIAS STORME (TENORSAX)
NIELS LEROY (BARITONSAX)
MUSIC RECORDING STUDIO **MUZIEKCENTRUM TRACK**
PRODUCTION-ASSISTANT **ELIEN THEUWISSEN**
PRODUCTION INTERN **JELRIK HUPKENS**
POST-PRODUCTION **OFF WORLD**
WALKING THE DOG
THE FRIDGE
IT-MANAGEMENT **MAARTEN DIERICKX**
HAN WITTERS
ACCOUNTANCY **MICHEL VAN DE WINKEL**
LEGAL ADVICE **HERMAN CROUX - MVVP**
INSURANCES **BCOH - CIRCLES GROEP**
THIS FILM IS PRODUCED BY **OFF WORLD**
DELEGATE PRODUCERS **ERIC GOOSSENS**
FREDERIK NICOLA
IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH **VRT-CANVAS**
CHANNEL MANAGER **OLIVIER GORIS**
COMMISSIONING EDITOR **SIMON VREBOS**
WITH THE SUPPORT FROM **FLANDERS AUDIOVISUAL FUND**
WITH THE SUPPORT FROM **CASA KAFKA PICTURES MOVIE TAX SHELTER**
EMPOWERED BY BELFIS
CEO **ISABELLE MOLHANT**
WITH THE SUPPORT FROM **THE BELGIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TAX SHELTER**



Biography Annabel Verbeke



Annabel Verbeke, born in Ypres, Belgium in 1987, is a documentary filmmaker.

As a filmmaker, Annabel is looking for beauty in the most modest and common things surrounding us. She always has been fascinated by subjects that are seemingly common but at the same not always very visible. She like to unhide and unravel these fascinating stories, bringing both its poetry and absurdity to the surface. This often neglected but obvious beauty is the core of Annabel essayistic and serene filmic approach. Banality is changed into poetry, darkness of life countered with refined humor.

In 2010, Annabel graduated Cum Laude at RITCS Film School in Brussels. Her graduation film "Les enfants de la mer/mère" - "Children of the sea" won 8 international awards and was selected by more than 20 international film festivals. The Flanders Audiovisual Fund honoured her with a wildcard, giving her the budget and opportunity to create a new documentary project. "Children of the sea" was broadcasted on the national Belgian broadcasting company VRT-Canvas.

Her wildcard project, entitled "We will remember them", was released in 2018. In this film Annabel travels back to the area where she grew up as a little kid: the Westhoek in Belgium, where 100 years ago the First World War was so heavily fought. Today Annabel makes a journey through this region, where war museums, cemeteries and monuments are playing a central role in both history and daily reality, trying to understand the contemporary meaning of commemoration.

In the past years, Annabel has been working as a freelancer for several broadcasters and production companies, directing commissioned documentary films, series and tv programmes.

Currently she is developing a new documentary series in collaboration with both national Belgian broadcasters VRT-Canvas and RTBF, and with the support from the Flanders Audiovisual Fund, called "Duo for a job". In this 6-part documentary series, young people with a migration background are supported in their search for suitable and intended work by native and somewhat older Belgian people, who are looking for a new challenge in their life. Annabel will be the leading director, managing and tutoring a group of young talented directors, freshly graduated from Docmads.eu. Docmads is a joint masters programme in documentary filmmaking delivered by a consortium of three prominent European universities across three countries: Portugal, Hungary and Belgium. All young directors will have a migration background themselves, which takes the project to a next level. She is looking forward to this unique exchange of cultures and stories between filmmakers and characters.

filmography Annabel Verbeke

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM (2018, 58 minuten)



<https://vimeo.com/294942547>

(password wwrt2018)

Ever since 1919, the daily life in Ypres, capital of Flanders Fields, has been dedicated to commemorating the First World War. On her journey through this landscape of remembrance, filmmaker Annabel Verbeke encounters the most diverse and sometimes contradictory ways of commemorating.

We Will Remember Them is produced by **Off World**, in coproduction with **VRT-Canvas** supported by **VAF | Film** and the **Tax Shelter of the Belgian Federal Government**.

TERMINUS (2014)
PART OF THE TV-SERIES 4X7



[Watch TERMINUS on vimeo](#)

(<https://vimeo.com/287113094>)

80 years old Joseph only has one dream: sailing the sea together with his grandson. Day to day, he prepares the moment his dream would come true from his tiny apartment at the seaside. While looking at the sea, Joseph keeps on dreaming. His apartment endorses his imagination: it steadily turns into a ship.

LES ENFANTS DE LA MER/MÈRE (2010)



[Watch on vimeo](#) (password: enfants123)

(<https://vimeo.com/131649085>)

Ostend's Ibis is a boarding school for boys who come from troubled homes or who have behavioural problems. Many of these children are missing one of the most important elements of childhood: the warmth of their families, but together they form a community. They eat together, sloop together and all wear the same maritime uniform. Because their home lives often lack structure, the school tries to provide them with an environment where norms and conventions are clearly defined. The youngest group of boys give their personal and often innocent impressions of the school and their own homes. Even though each of them has a story, they also have a story in common.

Awards: Canvas Lichtpunt Award, Grote Ongeduld, Belgium, VAF- wildcard, International Short Film Festival Leuven, Belgium, Best documentary under 30 minutes, Sehsüchte Filmfestival, Potsdam, Germany, Award for Best documentary Kavalan shortfilm festival, Taiwan, Kid's land archive award Kavalan shortfilm festival, Taiwan, Le grand prix du Charleroi Festimages, Belgium, Cilect prize, RITS representing film, Special mention Sediciorto, Italy

Festival selections: 2010: official selection IDFA - Panorama / Reflecting Images, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, official selection Filmfestival Oostend, Belgium, official selection het Grote Ongeduld, Belgium, official selection Charleroi Festimages, Belgium. 2011: official selection Doxa Filmfestival, Vancouver, Canada official selection Docville, Leuven, Belgium, official selection Sehsüchte Filmfestival, Potsdam, Germany, official selection Kavalan shortfilm festival, Taiwan, official selection SIFF mobile, Shanghai, China, official selection Belgesel documentary Festival, Istanbul, Turkey, official selection Beijing first filmfestival, China, official selection DOK, Sediciorto, Italy (Finalist), official selection Etudia & Anima - FICC award-Krakow, Poland, official selection Rencontres Henri Langlois - Poitiers, France, 2012: official selection Go Short- International Short film Festival, Nijmegen, The Netherlands, official selection Full Frame Documentary - Durham, U.S.A, broadcasted at Lichtpunt (2011) and several special screenings.



DOCUMENTARY PRODUCER

companies
Off World, Belgium
(2008-2020)
www.offworld.be

Zeppers Film, Netherlands
(2005-2008)
www.zeppers.nl

LECTOR

DocNomads (2013-...)
a two-year, full time, international
graduate program delivered by a
consortium of three prominent
European universities across three
countries: Portugal, Hungary and
Belgium.
www.docnomads.eu

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BIOGRAPHY

Frederik Nicolai (Belgium 1977) started his career by executive producing fiction series, feature and short films in Belgium and the Netherlands, such as the short films 'Haun' and 'Carlo' by Oscar nominated director Michael R. Roskam. Then he completely dedicated himself to author documentaries. Ever since Frederik produced and co-produced over 40 author successful documentary films & series and established a large international network of broadcasters, sales-agents, distributors, festivals,...

Some successful films and series produced by Frederik are '4 Elements' (Jiska Rickels, opening film of IDFA 2006), Red Star Line (documentary series, 10+ worldwide broadcasters), El Color Del Camaleon (10+ awards, 40+ festival selections), Archibelge (on of the most viewed Belgian documentaries ever), and many more. For a complete and detailed filmography, please visit offworld.be

Films in his editorial line should spring from the passion and creativity of the documentary author, providing a contemporary and wayward look on the world from inside out. His documentaries should tell stories that fight taboos and stigmas, create new insights, opinions, critical point-of-views, provide a broader and more critical world view, necessary in our often one-dimensionally evolving society.

Creating and producing documentary film is not just a profession. It is a passion, a mission based on the constant urge to unravel latent dynamics and unknown aspects of our society.

Besides producing, Frederik is also scriptwriter, teacher and directors coach for young filmmakers.

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

AS AN AUTHOR/WRITER

DUO FOR A JOB, documentary series in collaboration with Annabel Verbeke and 6 DocNomad Students, Off World/VRT/RTBF **BORDERLINE** documentary series, Off World/Kinoteka/In Script/Momento Films/VRT (author, producer) **ARCHIBELGE**, documentary series by Gilles Cotton, Sofie Benoot, Olivier Magis Off World/Playtime Films/VRT/RTBF (Co-writer, producer) **ARCHIBELGE**, an online experience (writer & curator) **THE BOYS IS GONE**, documentary film by Christoph Bohn, RTBF/VRT/BRF/Simple Production/Serious Film/Off World (co-author)

AS A PRODUCER & CO-PRODUCER

- 2018 **WE WILL REMEMBER THEM**, a film by Annabel verbeke '58 Off World/VRT
2017 **EL COLOR DEL CAMALEON**, a film by Andrés Lubbert ('90 & '52)
EXITUS, series - Off World/Submarine/NTR/VAF/VRT (8 x '26)
HOW TO MEET A MERMAID, a film by Coco Schrijber (1 x '90) Off World/Zeppers Film/ House of Reel/VAF/VPRO/DRK
2016 **On the Traces of Robert Van Gulik**, a film by Rob Rombout ('75) Off World/Zeppers Film
2015 **Reveka**, a film by Christopher Yates & Benjamin Colaux ('70) Off World/Playtime Films
2014 **Desert Haze**, documentary film by Sofie Benoot ('110) Off World/Zeppers Film
The 2 wars of Alan Turing, documentary film by Denis Van Waerebeke ('50) Off World/Films d'Ici/ARTE/RTBF/Creative Europe/Procirep/CNC/la région Poitou-Charentes/Sofica
So You Wanna Be, a children documentary series by Benoit Van Wambeke (26 x '13)
Off World/Ketnet/Arte Geie/RTBF/Agentschap Ondernemen
2013 **Red Star Line**, a series by Daniel Cattier & Fabio Wuytack 3 x '50, RTBF/VRT/Comm. Fr/VAF/
Creative Europe/Bruxellimage/Eklektik Prod/Off World
Yes, We Catch, documentary film by Cédric Bourgeois et Xavier Séron ('50)
RTBF/VRT/Novak Prod/Off World
Rêve Kakudji, a film by Ibbe Daniëls & Koen Vidal ('65) VRT/Creative Europe/DG-D/Off World
2012 **Reinhoud, mon sculpteur**, a film by Blaise D'Haese ('50) RTBF/VRT/Off World
La Terre Amoureuse, a film by Manu Bonmariage ('50) RTBF/VRT/Iota Prod/Off World
2011 **Little Heaven**, a film by Lieven corthouts ('70) LICHTPUNT/VAF/RAI/Off World
The Last Passage, a film by Iurre Telleria ('75) RTBF/France3/AmoFilm/MoztuFilmak/Off World
2010 **The Promised land**, a film by Pascal Verbeken RTBF/VRT/VAF/Off World
Leaving Mandela Park, a film by Saskia Vredevelde KON/Zeppers Film/Off World/Lichtpunt/I
La Royale harmonie, a by Manu Bonmariage ('50) RTBF/VRT/VAF/Off World
2009 **Between Heaven and Earth**, a by Frank van den Engel and Masha Novikova, VAF/IKON/
Zeppers Film/Off World
My Future, documentary by Lieven Corthouts ('50) DGOS/TV3/VAF, line producer
2006 **4 Elements**, documentary by Jiska Rickels ('90) NPS/NFF/STIFO/VRT/Fu Works
George Sluizer - Filming beyond Boundaries, a film by Hans Heijnen NPS/Zeppers Film

ABOUT OFF WORLD

Off World is an independent production company based in Brussels, capital of Flanders, Belgium and Europe. Off World's main goal is to produce international author documentaries. Over the last few years, the company has built up a large portfolio and a solid reputation as delegate producer and co-producer of many creative and original documentaries.

Off World's trademark is a contemporary and wayward look on the world, which springs from the passion and talent of the documentary authors. Starting from its own clear and sometimes narrow context, Off World wants to tell stories with a broader truth, with a universal value, reaching people across all borders. We have specialised in recent years in producing very personal creative documentaries that analyse society from the inside and shine a new light on truths that have become mere clichés. In so doing, we always take a social (films about migration, poverty, Africa) and/or artistic (portraits of artists, etc.) approach.

Off World has build up a long term collaboration with renowned and distinguished documentary authors. However, Off World is also consistently investing in young filmmakers, as a creative investment for the future.

recent films: **We Will Remember Them**, a film by Annabel Verbeke in coproduction with VRT-Canvas // **El Color Del Camaleon**, a film by Andrés Lübbert in coproduction with Blume Producciones (Chile) // **Exitus**, a documentary series by Toon Loenders and Bob Thissen, in co-production with Submarine, NTR (NL) and VRT-Canvas // **How To Meet a Mermaid** a film by Coco Schrijber in coproduction with eppers Film, VPOR (NL), House of Reel, DR (DK), IDFA 2016 // **Archibelge**, a documentary series by Sofie Benoot, Olivier Magis, Frederik Nicolai and Gilles Coton, in co-production with Playtime Films RTBF and VRT-Canvas // **Red Star Line**, a documentary series by Daniël Cattier and Fabio Wuytack, in co-production with Eklektik, RTBF and VRT-Canvas, **Desert Haze**, a film by Sofie Benoot, in co-production with Zeppers Film (NL) // **Reinoud, My Sculptor**, a film by Blaise D'Haese, in coproduction with RTBF // **Rêve kakudji**, a film by Ibbe Daniels and Koen Vidal, in co-production with VRT- Canvas (IDFA 2015) // **La Terre Amoureuse**, a film by Manu Bonmariage, in coproduction with Iota Production, and RTBF // **Little Heaven**, a film by Lieven Corthouts, in co-production with DGOS, Lichtpunt // **The Boy is Gone**, a film by Christoph Bohn, in coproduction with Simple Production, VRT-Canvas, BRF, RTBF (BE) and SeriousFilm (NL) // **The Last Passage**, a film by Iurre Telleria en Enara Goikoetxea, in coproduction with RTBF (BE) Moztu Filmak, ETB (ESP) and Amo Film, France Télévisions (FR) // **Kongo**, a film by Samuel Tilman, in coproduction with Eklektik (BE), RTBF, ARTE, VRT-CANVAS // **Leaving Mandela Park**, a film by Saskia Vredevelde, in coproduction with Zeppers Film & TV, IKON (NL) and Lichtpunt (BE) // **La Royale Harmonie**, a film by Manu Bonmariage, in coproduction with RTBF // **The Promised Land**, (La terre Promise/Arm Wallonië) a film by Luckas Vander Taelen and Pascal Verbeken, in coproduction with Canvas and RTBF // **Paul Dujardin, The Long March** a film by Manu Riche, in coproduction with Canvas, RTBF, & ARTE // **My Future**, a film by Lieven Corthouts, broadcasted by ARTE, TV5 MONDE, TV3, TVI24,... // for complete filmography, visit www.offworld.be

CONTACT

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