

Press pack

# Anthony Caro

## CHAPEL OF LIGHT

A commission for the church of  
**Saint-Jean-Baptiste de  
Bourbourg**

Opening on the 11th October 2008



<b>Press release</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The public commission</b>	<b>4</b>
History of the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Bourbourg Restoration work on the choir of the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste «Chapel of light », a public commission in a listed building « Space built by sculpture » Artist's notes Plan of the choir	
<b>Biography and bibliography</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Waiting for Caro – Projects for the public</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Our Partners</b>	<b>20</b>
Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication Conseil Régional Nord - Pas de Calais Communauté Urbaine de Dunkerque Député du Nord Sivom de l'Aa Ville de Bourbourg Archidiocèse de Lille	
<b>Financing the project</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>The territory and the context for tourism</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Practical information</b>	<b>29</b>

# Communiqué

## « CHAPEL OF LIGHT » Eglise Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Bourbourg Inauguration 11 October 2008

Sir Antony Caro was chosen to make «Chapel of light» as part of the project for the restoration of the choir of the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste at Bourbourg near Dunkerque by the French Ministry for Culture and Communication (Delegation for Visual Arts, Direction régionale des affaires culturelles Nord - Pas de Calais. The town of Bourbourg has asked the group of associated communes, the SIVOM de l'Aa to direct work on this exceptional project.

The size of the commission is unusual as is the fact that the choir space will adapted for baptisms.

The public commission dates from 2000. It was decided on by the French Ministry of Culture to coincide with the completion of the restoration of the Gothic choir of Saint-Jean-Baptiste by the Regional Foundation for Historical Monuments for the Nord Pas de Calais. Listed as a historical monument in 1920, the church suffered major damage in 1940. Following a request from the Lille Diocese, Anthony Caro has also designed furniture for the interior of the church.

« **Le chœur de lumière** » « **Chapel of light** » is made up of a group of 15 sculptures. These are spread out on the 450 m2 floor of the church, which acts as a plinth. The group forms a generous circle respecting liturgical and spiritual considerations but also offers a shared experience and the discovery of a new space.

The work is site specific and is of major importance given the international reputation of the artist and the significance in terms of the location, size and volume of the edifice chosen for the work. This artwork is a means of breathing new life into the choir.

This commission is the result of an exceptional partnership between local municipal bodies, the French State, the Diocese and the Association of the Friends of Saint-Jean- Baptiste. The Church at Bourbourg will be revived as an important centre of contemporary creation, a space for dialogues between architecture, sculpture and religious art.

# The public commission

## History of the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Bourbourg

Bourbourg (from the Flemish Brouckbourg) means «castle in the marshes». It has been the seat of a lord of the manor since the Middle Ages. The town itself dates from before 1000, probably the 8th or 9th centuries, when this marshes near the coast began to be occupied. Robert II of Jerusalem, the Count of Flanders, gave this reclaimed marshland to the monks of the abbey of Saint Bertin at Saint-Omer on his return from the crusades. The monks collected revenue from it. Over time several convents and abbeys were founded near Bourbourg, among them the abbey of the Noble Ladies (les Dames Nobles) founded in the 12th century by Clemence de Bourgogne, Countess of Flanders.

A church is mentioned in Bourbourg from the 11th century, certainly built by the monks of Saint-Bertin. The base of the masonry in irregular ferruginous sandstone can be seen on the lower parts of the Western façade, the most important vestiges of a first Romanesque edifice which had a basilica-like structure.

A new choir was erected around the middle of the 13th century in the Gothic style with an ogival vault, inspired by the Ile de France's churches (the monks at Saint-Bertin had close contacts with the religious institutions in the Paris region). Light enters from the side through high windows. This part of the edifice is one of the exceptional examples of Gothic art in the Nord Pas de Calais. The chevet is particularly remarkable, with small columns framing lancet windows. Also noteworthy are the narrative capitals on the columns as well as the keystone where the Angels of the Apocalypse sound their trumpets. On another Christ as the Good Shepherd bring the straying sheep back to the fold.

The Western door presents a transitional style between the Romanesque and the Gothic with a striking original feature: the trefoil arch resting on small columns with capitals.

The transepts were added in the 15th century and the church was transformed into a hallekerque (church and church hall) around the end of the 16th century with the additional of naves to the side of the main Romanesque nave. Other significant changes took place around this time, with the prolongation of the transepts and the alteration of the West façade. The Northern gable showed the date 1571 (lost in the 1940 fire) and the Southern gable is dated 1614. The belltower is thought to be date from the same period.

A first catastrophe struck the building in 1739 with the collapse of the bell-tower whose fall ruined the nave. Between 1769 and 1771 the nave was completely rebuilt and elevated. An organ gallery was built in 1778. The instrument with its 33 pipes and its organ case was installed at the same time. A large part of the edifice fell victim to another catastrophe, this time with even more dire consequences. On 25 May 1940, a few days after the German attack on Dunkerque, a German plane crashed in rue Carnot. While in free fall it dropped petrol on the church roof: the wooden beams caught fire and collapsed. The fire partly destroyed the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste. For several years the church remained roofless and became an open playground. Many acts of vandalism were committed. The nave was finally restored using war reparations funds from 1955 by the chief architect for historical monuments Charles Waldschmidt (then by Etienne Poncelet between 1982 and 1990). The choir area was propped up and consolidated but restoration work was not undertaken. A brick wall was built to separate the nave and the choir and allow cultural events to take place.

Philippe HERTEL  
Curator for historical monuments  
Regional department for cultural affairs for the Nord - Pas de Calais

Bibliography :

DUPAS, Georges : *Le clergé, les couvents et leurs biens dans la châtellenie de Bourbourg avant la Révolution*, Galaad, Dunkerque, 2000  
DUPAS, Georges : *Histoire de Bourbourg et de sa châtellenie*, Westhoek-éditions, Dunkerque, 1978  
DEZITTER, J. : *Bourbourg et son église*, Westhoek-éditions, Dunkerque, 1983  
LOTTE, Ernest : *Les églises de la Flandre française au nord de la Lys*, S.I.L.I.C., Imprimeur de l'évêché, Lille, 1940  
Bulletin du comité flamand de France : *Excursion à Bourbourg et séance du 6 juillet 1939*, tome XI N°11, juillet-septembre 1939. Librairie René Giard. Lille. 1939

## Restoration work on the choir of the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste

After hearing about the project for a work by Sir Anthony Caro in the choir of the church at Bourbourg, a listed historical monument from 1920, the Historical Monuments Commission (*Commission supérieure des monuments historiques, 1ère sous-section, travaux sur monuments classés*), authorised this intervention. They stipulated however that a partition wall between the nave and the choir dating from after the Second World War needed to be removed and paving made to bring the two spaces back to the same level. The work was duly carried out by the Direction régionale des affaires culturelles Nord - Pas de Calais (Conservation régionale des monuments historiques). Work on the building was directed by the head architect for historical monuments, Vincent Brunelle.

Prior to the reworking of the floor of the choir, from March 2002 to May 2003, the limestone outer walls of the building were cleaned and the stained glass windows were repaired also under the auspices of the Direction régionale des affaires culturelles Nord - Pas de Calais. Alongside this work and recognizing the church would need to be heated (particularly due the reopening of the choir/nave part of the church) options for underground heating in the choir area were studied. Heat accumulating floors were chosen as compatible with Caro's work and not visible unlike other heating systems used in religious buildings.

The work was carried out by the town authorities in Bourbourg with technical and scientific assistance from the *Conservation régionale des monuments historiques*, supervised by Vincent Brunelle. Prior to the installation of the heating the reworking of the ground an archaeological excavation was carried out in December 2005 by the *Institut national de recherches en archéologie préventive* (INRAP) directed by Frédéric Lemaire. The excavation revealed potential archeological interest and complex structures with many strata.

About twenty two graves, most with wooden coffins and containing skeletons, were dug up in front of the choir. They belong to three groups on different levels. Some to date from the end of the Middle Ages according to samples taken which link them with the Gothic part of the vestiges. One grave with a limestone casing could date from before the Romanesque period. Other very interesting structures were unearthed including what is probably the remains of an apse of an original Romanesque choir. Other tombs suggest an even older sanctuary existed before these. No paving stones like those found during the first excavation in 1994 in the Chapelle de la Vierge were uncovered. The project for installing a work of art was the opportunity to deepen the archaeological and historical understanding of this building through collaboration between the heritage services.

Jacques PHILIPPON  
Regional curator for historical monuments  
Regional department for cultural affairs for the Nord - Pas de Calais

## « CHAPEL OF LIGHT »

### The work of Anthony Caro for the choir of the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste

A public commission for a listed building

(...) A WORK FOR A PARTICULAR SPACE:

At the end of 1999, Antony Caro was invited to visit the ruined chapel at the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste in Bourbourg in order to make a proposal for this ambitious project. The British artist, whose work since the sixties contributed to the renewal of monumental sculpture, was chosen as one of the foremost living sculptors. He had just finished work on *the Last Judgement*, a magnificent group of sculptures made between 1995 and 1999. This is a large scale narrative sculpture group whose 25 elements each play with notions of scale, modeling and design using terracotta, wood, stone and metal. *The Last Judgement* confirms the artist's return to the figure but for the first time Caro introduces references to recent history. This is a clear response to the horrors of ethnic conflicts from Bosnia to Rwanda. The Scriptures remain the main source, but passages from mythology and references to current crises are added. Each sculpture was envelopped in a wood parallelepiped; a massive door leads the visitor into the area where the 25 "stations" are aligned. The whole work forms a dramatic piece of striking unity.

On his first visit to Bourbourg the artist was literally swept away by the spirit of the place. The building made an impression on him as soon as he stepped over the threshold between the transept and the rest of the church. The chapel has a distinctive spatial quality thanks to the proportion of its volumes and the play of light in the building. The artist, moved by the physical reality of this mineral mass where each stone has a story to tell about conflict, accepted the challenge.

It should be remembered that Anthony Caro, then second lieutenant in the Royal Navy, lived through the Blitz in wartime London. The critic Marcelin Pleyne links this event with the sculptor's approach, commenting that the sculptor's character expresses a «particularly European way of thinking in relation to the ground». The multiple relationships explored here between sculpture and space allow each work to express itself. From the 80s Caro's growing interest in experimenting with space intensifies the connections between sculpture and architecture: he used the term «sculptitecture» to underline this close correlation. *The Last Judgement* generates its own space. It forms an autonomous group not bound to a particular place.

At Bourbourg the chapel had already acquired its own identity; its open space offered itself to the sculptor like a receptacle. Like a surveyor Anthony Caro started by sizing up the ground. The intensity of his feeling for the place was a decisive beginning to a relationship forged over a ten year gestation period. The extraordinary power of this initial contact determined the way forward for the project. Back in the studio, while contemplating a scale model of the choir, the artist stated that : « The church's choir will be both a baptistery and a chapel of hope, and facing east it will catch the morning sun. » (Free translation from the French).

The work at Bourbourg has been thought through with the place in mind. It is a response to the architecture; revisited, it is seen in a new light. The new floor also

plays a role in determining where and how the sculptures are placed as does the volume as a whole.

The reintroduction of the baptismal fonts is an opportunity for Anthony Caro to transform this disused, vacant space into a place of inspiration, infused with meaning. The itinerary in sculptures fixes the attention on the baptismal fonts which appear to control each step the visitor takes.

There are two levels to this work; the monumental composition works like a musical score. The journey is made around fifteen sculptures, arranged in a circle, a dominant form which reappears throughout the work. The visitor is taken on a journey through recurring variations.

The choir dominates the fore-choir, several steps lower and is centred on the fonts. This is circular; the concrete has the same texture as the mineral expanse from which it emerges. Its volume is made up of a double spiral which half-opens to give access to steps. In the font area there are nine wall niches on the inner apse wall. Each niche has a high relief sculpture in sheet steel and terracotta. The themes of water and the Creation are the source of inspiration for this shifting, swaying work, a continuous movement of folds, rifts and overlapping elements. The alternate layers of clay and steel express the movements of matter and life in a land before time.

The work in the fore-choir space is composed of three separate parts; a sculpture in the arch of the nave, flanked by two lateral aisles. Two tower sculptures border the central area and reinforce its verticality. They are made of French oak and are almost five metres high. Built around the south and north pillars that they rub against them fondly. These tall giants rise up into the air, becoming more generous in form, deploying their volumes. The slender, airy south pillar filters the light. The denser north tower provides a counterweight. The round mass of its opaque sides absorbs the light. These two pieces evoke the nearby pulpits: their silhouette calls to mind medieval towers, the echo of an ancient past.

These volumes are impressive thanks to the size of the tree trunk used for their powerful, radiant structure. They draw our gaze upwards. This ascending movement is not abstract, it is concrete. By following the line of these "towers" the church space is used in a novel way: the architecture remains, the space changes.

On either side of the towers, each aisle in the apse contains a sculpture. On the south side it is composed of fragments and pieces of figurines of a blackish-brown colour, a profusion of terracotta and stoneware. On the north side a high relief stands out from the wall. Two figures half way up the wall are brought together, put side by side, as if bound for life: the couple is standing constrained by a wooden yoke. Stiffened by pain, the couple seems to advance: the snake beneath them is preparing to strike. The two sculpture groups in the apse mark out a journey in the mind. The one in the south set us on our way, the one in the north puts the journey off, but not indefinitely.

At the place where choir meets transept, the artist uses a translucent glass screen to frame the preacher's raised podium. The altar, cross, candelabra, lectern and tabernacle complete the liturgical furniture, finishing off the sanctuary space. Outside a large sculpture like a circular porch marks the southern aisle of the church. This steel piece is visibly contemporary and aims to form a link to the spiritual space. The sculpture guards the side entry to the baptistery and prepares the visitor for the discovery of the choir. This passage gives stability and



is the connection between the cylindrical movement of the pilgrims and the daily comings and goings of the secular world.

At Bourbourg Sir Anthony Caro marries the theatrical side of his art and the religious rites and constraints imposed by the building. There is a puzzling beauty: simultaneously refined and expressive, contemporary and timeless. The artist breathes life into his composition which transcends the tragic destiny of the place. He draws on historical sources and restructures the whole edifice. Through several groups of works, the artist offers a sensitive experience of the site and puts the material at the service of the spiritual. The sculpted itinerary for Saint-Jean-Baptiste reintroduces a horizon of hope into an abandoned space, one composed of forms, sensitive values which allow one to have faith in life and to choose its presence rather than abandon it.

Olivier KAEPPÉLIN  
Delegate for visual arts  
Ministry of Culture and Communication

## A space which builds the sculpture

When he was approached by the Ministry of Culture and Communication, Anthony Caro requested a 1 / 20 ° scale model of the East side of the church. This initial request was a measure of how crucial architecture was to the artist. A spatial representation of the place, placed in London, could aid his memory and inspire the surprising things which Anthony Caro was to create for Bourbourg. The relationship with the place was constantly at the origin of choices in terms of volume, materials or techniques.

The work was done with the space in mind, a space whose qualities were perceived and understood in an immediate way, even if this immediacy is heavy with the weight of history. Such a direct relationship with space is unusual: the artist has to put aside preconceptions, even those which seem justified to accept that, for example, the architectural space can be included in the sculpture's own space and it is not only the context which should inform a proposal for a sculpture. The almost tactile approach of Anthony Caro to light gives depth and a physical presence to the works and the movement around visitors. All this makes for a very tight, very close relationship between work and place. Intervals, spacing, height are measured differently now that they are related both to the architecture and the work. Space is perceived differently in this Gothic church, its light is now seen from other angles, in other situations, impossible before.

The work also builds its own space by its physical presence, which Anthony Caro is careful to underline. This presence can be linked with today's architecture : the corten steel sections of the outer tower, the sheets of crude steel in the niches and the altar, the solid wood towers, and, also in Bourbourg, concrete baptismal fonts, designed and made at the same time as the restoration of the choir's floor.

This interaction between the space and the processes of sculpture and architecture

has required a technical assessment, if only to ensure a correct, stable installation. The engineer Marc Malinowski gave valuable advice on how to set up works. Most importantly, the building techniques and know-how had to be adapted to the needs of the work. The wooden assemblages made by Joylon Oliver, use the circularity of the wood towers work in a different way to the traditional pole/beam.

Sculptures by Anthony Caro are not meant to be instructive. They are not an expression of simplified truth about how to build objects : it is the way the whole space is created with each detail which is important.

Another example can be given : the Sotrasen Masonry company who made the floor of the choir did not make imitation stone even if the slab format might suggest this. The clue to the fact that the material has been poured (and not cut) is in the rounded edges and mineral layer spread out and away from the base of the walls. This reinforces the verticality of the monument. It also helps the edges of the baptismal font to emerge more clearly from the floor.

The commitment of the companies collaborating on the project is a direct product of the way Anthony Caro works in his own studio, choosing construction techniques rather than applying those suggested, with a freedom and a critical distance which are always ingenious. The constructive process serves the creative process and they cannot always be distinguished from each other in the

concrete result: sometimes technical considerations come first and are the fruits of research by the artist. Since obtaining the 1 / 20 ° model from the Regional Direction of Cultural Affairs for the Nord-Pas de Calais, Anthony Caro has made another 1 / 10 ° based on his own precise measurements. This became a constant reference for the artist, modified, pulled in all directions as long as there was a chance of finding a new idea. Caro also made half size or full size versions, working on them with those who were to carry out the work. These are more prototypes than models. Sketches for assemblages could be worked on (in the case of wood pieces) to check if the volume suited the space. The plywood model for the fonts was taken into the church and tested before it was made in concrete.

Apart from the pieces made directly by Anthony Caro, technical drawings were provided for collaborators (steel, carpentry, masonry companies) but first the technique to be used was tested. These companies do not become simple executants, they get involved before the pieces are drawn (a difference incidentally with the process of architecture). The need for a technical drawing has therefore not impeded the creative process: Anthony Caro sometimes reworks a piece like the southern wood tower to change things, or more exactly to extend the scope to take into account a carpenter's skills for example. In the interaction it has with architecture, the work of Anthony Caro not only raises the question of space and inhabited space : it is also has things to say about how architecture is made.

Pierre BERNARD  
Architect, assistant to Anthony Caro

## Artist's statements : Anthony Caro

«...As you know, I had a much broader brief in mind, inspired by the history of the area. This part of France has been fought over in war after war, by armies from many different nations, and I feel the choir should be a memorial to those who suffered and died. For this reason I chose the idea of a place of meditation and worship for anybody of any religion... »

Anthony Caro, august 2001

«...I would hope to make the choir into a place of meditation and repose for those for whom this area of France has resonance. My desire to keep the wall is not indicative of a wish to separate the two parts of the church or to make a kind of art gallery or museum, but I would hope that the choir could be a sanctuary for the people of all religions who wish to be reminded of the atrocities of war...»

Anthony Caro, September 2001

« - What projects are you working on now ?

- I am completing this group of terracotta, wood, steel and leather sculptures that I told you about – « The Barbarians ». People will put different interpretations onto it, but people bring their own selves to art and they each complete it in their own personal way. Then, there is a Gothic church in a part of northern France where there has been fighting at various times in the last century and earlier. It is not far from Lille and the Belgian border, close to Ypres. The church was badly damaged in the 1940's and the choir has lain empty since then. The French Ministry has invited me to fill this area with a sculpture installation and I want to make a chapel of memory. This is a very exciting project as it will comprise several sculptures, reliefs and towers. I am very much looking forward to getting started on this but I must have a free hand. Hopefully the discussions about it will be clear by the autumn and I will be ready to begin. »

A conversation with Anthony CARO: interview by Pep Subiros, February 2002

« The choir of the church of St Jean-Baptiste de Bourbourg will be a Baptistry and Chapel of Hope. Facing east and south it will capture the morning sun. Because the north and south aisles will be separated by a frosted glass screen, this brightness will be apparent from the main body of the church. In the centre of the choir the separation will be by a clear glass screen. (...)

The center aisle leads to the apse, within which are 9 niches. The subjects for the sculptures for these niches will be suggested by the Diocesan Commission of Sacred Art's biblical texts.

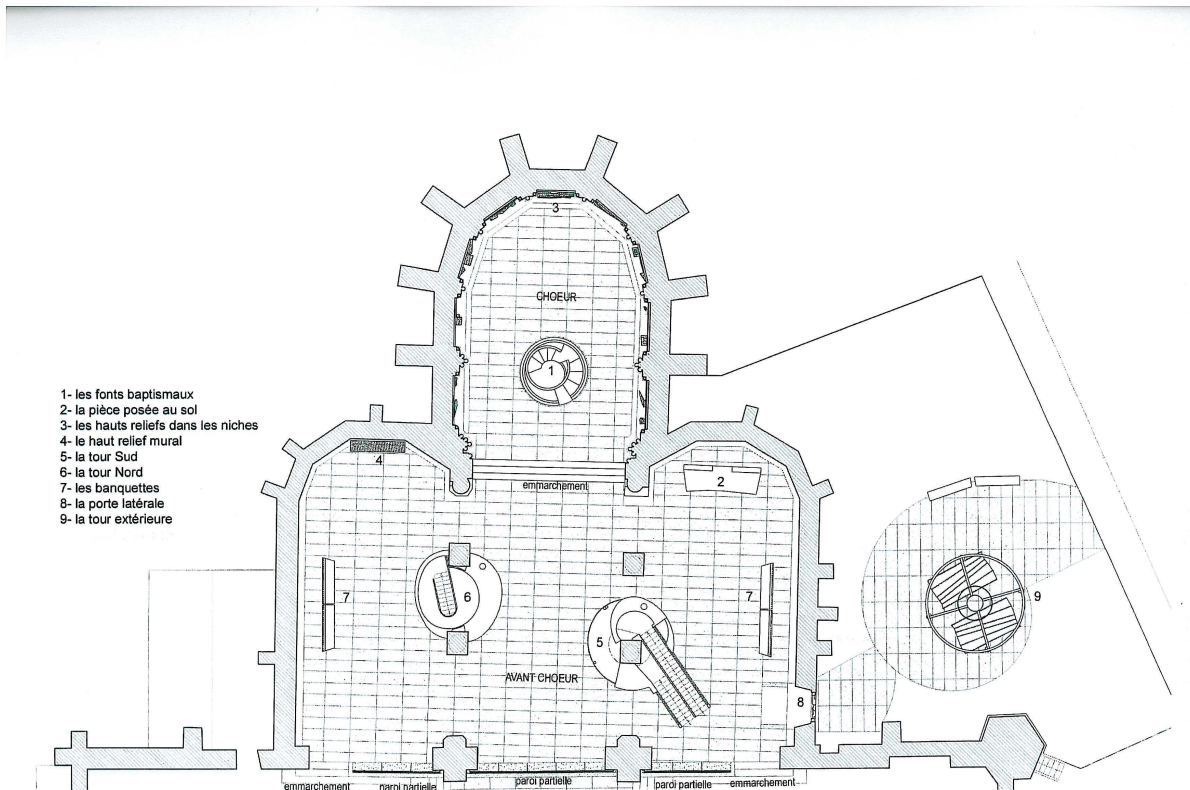
The central representation will be the Lamb of God. Those surrounding will reflect a sense of movement or journey from everyday materiality towards spirituality. (...)

In the north aisle is a pulpit-like structure where visitors can not only get a sense of the physical height of the church but also experience a sense of ascending of the spirit. (...)

The Baptistry or Chapel of Hope is intended to signify the journey from darkness to light, from closeness, through the cleansing and spiritual power of water, to an indication of paradise. »

Anthony CARO, June 2002

## Plan of the choir area



- 1- les fonts baptismaux
- 2- la pièce posée au sol
- 3- les hauts reliefs dans les niches
- 4- le haut relief mural
- 5- la tour Sud
- 6- la tour Nord
- 7- les banquettes
- 8- la porte latérale
- 9- la tour extérieure

### 1 – church furniture :

> **altar** / stone, steel and terracotta, L 260, l 109, h 98 cm, 4 t

> **cross** / steel, 150 kg

> **2 lecterns** / steel, 2x50 kg

> **2 candelabras** / steel, 2x40 kg

> **2 – Outer tower « Threshold sculpture»**

corten steel, diam 470 cm, h 420 cm, 19 t

**3 - towers:**

**north tower « Tower of evening »** / oak, L 435, l 430, h 530 cm, 5 t

**south tower « Tower of morning »** / oak, L 725, l 440, h 525 cm, 5 t

**4 - 9 high-reliefs in choir** / steel, terracotta and wood, 9x750 kg

**5 – baptismal fonts** / concrete, diam 360 cm, h 160 cm, 9 t

**6 - sculpture « Alleluia »**

Steel, terracotta and wood, L 374, l 130, h 220 cm, 4 t

**7 – high relief « Paradise Garden »**

Steel, terracotta and wood, L 380, l 116, h 340 cm, 4 t

**8 - benches**

**north** / concrete, L 435, p 74, h 85 cm, 2 t

**south** / concrete, L 370, p 74, h 85 cm, 1,5 t

**9 – side access door** / oak, 150 kg

**10 – translucent glass screen**

# Biography & bibliography

## Biography

Born in 1924 in New Malden, Surrey, Anthony Caro is one of the major sculptors our time, a trailblazer for English contemporary sculpture but working in the tradition of Picasso and González. Caro began experimenting with the technique of modeling in clay and made figurative sculptures.

From 1951 to 1953 he was Henry Moore's last assistant. From his apprenticeship with Moore, Caro retained a fidelity to the materials used, a work which is truly three-dimensional, a quest for vitality and power in his expression.

In 1953, he returned to London, where he taught at St. Martin's School of Art. Among his students were artists Richard Deacon, Barry Flanagan, Richard Long, and Isaac Witkin. He has had and continues to have a crucial influence on the young generation of artists.

In 1958, Anthony Caro stayed in the USA thanks to a grant from the Ford foundation. He was looking for ways to escape the domination of the figurative, to change materials. He began using steel, a material whose ability to resist and its formal qualities he appreciated. He became acquainted with artists David Smith and Kenneth Noland, among others. He also met the art critic Clement Greenberg, whose conversations over many years were to have a profound influence on his artistic development.

In 1960, he made his first abstract steel work *Twenty-four hours* (completed in 1961; Tate Collection). The radical transformation of his art pushed him to reconsider his teaching methods.

Frank Martin set up a welding workshop at St. Martin's School. The experimental atmosphere at the school and exchanges with students were to be a permanent source of stimulation for the artist.

From that date, Caro was classified as a representative of abstract and constructivist sculpture. He used the metal in a natural state (steel, aluminium) freed his sculptures from the plinth by placing them on the ground, searched for the right balance to give empty spaces an expressive dimension. He produced both tight, solid, heavy sculptures and very open works with light linear elements. In this way he «exploded» sculptures in space.

In the 1980s, Anthony Caro intensified his research into the relationship between sculpture and architecture, but it was after a stay in Greece that he created After

Olympia (1986-1987), echoing the Ancient Greek high reliefs, with his majestic and free interpretation of Greek pediments. Placed on the ground, the impressive steel procession can be perceived as an artistic space in motion. After Olympia is today presented at the Public Defence Institution (EPAD), which owns the work.

The use of Ancient Greek Art was to allow Caro to make a gradual return to figurative elements in his abstract compositions.

At the start of the 1990s, the artist created two major cycles:

The Trojan War (1993-1994) and The Last Judgement (1995-1999) presented in Venice at the Biennial 1999 and in London for his retrospective at the Tate in 2005. This latter gave him an opportunity to intertwine stories from different sources: mythological, biblical and from today's society. The Last Judgement is a milestone in the artist's work. Here, for the first time, the artist confronts history. The piece is an echo of contemporary conflicts. Today, Caro's work has become more narrative, reflecting an openness and permeability to history. During recent decades, the artist has received many awards including the David E Bright Foundation Prize, at the Venice Biennale and the Julio Gonzàles Award, Valencia. He has exhibited his work in the most prestigious exhibitions in Paris, Sao Paulo, New York, Tokyo, Barcelona and London. In 1996 he was made Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres and Doctor Honoris Causa of the University of Lille.

Anthony Caro has just completed, as a public commission, a monumental group to breathe new life into the baptistery of the choir in the church at Bourbourg. The installation of this major work will create a centre for religious art of international importance, a potential motor for the Development of the coastal area of Flanders, comparable to Matisse's Chapel of the Rosary in Vence.

SCULPTURES BY CARO IN FRENCH PUBLIC COLLECTIONS :

Shuttle (1974), Musée des beaux-arts et de la dentelle de Calais

Seated Figure with Necklace II (1986), Seated Figure (1987), Torso II, Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Angers

*Chant des montagnes (1993-1994), Musée de Grenoble*

Emma Scribble (1977-1979), Musée d'art moderne Saint-Etienne Métropole

Concert (1994-1995), Centre national des arts plastiques, Paris

*After Olympia (1986-1987), Etablissement Public pour l'Aménagement de la région de la Défense*

Eclipse (1983), Ministère de la Culture, Paris

Table Piece CCCXC (1977), Musée National d'Art moderne Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

Descent from the Cross III - After Rembrandt (1989-1990), Musée d'art contemporain du Val de Marne (Créteil).

## Select bibliography

### Works in French

Bernard Blistene, *Anthony Caro*, Cahiers d'art contemporain, coll. Repères, Paris, Galerie Lelong, 1990

Terry Fenton, *Anthony Caro*. Ediciones Poligrafa S.A., Barcelona, 1986; Thames & Hudson, London, 1986; Rizzoli, New York, 1986; Albin Michel, Paris 1990

Patrick Le Nouene, *Anthony Caro: œuvres 1961-1989*, catalogue d'exposition, Calais, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1994

COLLECTIF, *Anthony Caro : sculptures et dessins figuratifs 1950-1990*, catalogue d'exposition, Angers, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1996

Serge Fauchereau, *Anthony Caro : The Marker Series*, catalogue d'exposition, Cahiers d'art contemporain, coll. Repères, Paris, Galerie Lelong, 1996

Jean Christophe Delpierre, *Un siècle de sculpture anglaise*, catalogue d'exposition, Paris, Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, 1996

COLLECTIF, *Le musée à l'heure Anglaise - Sculptures de la collection du British Council 1965-1998*, catalogue d'exposition, Valenciennes, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1999

Ann Hindry ; *Anne Roquebert, Anthony Caro, Édouard Manet*, Paris, Musée d'Orsay, Correspondances Musée d'Orsay- art contemporain n°5, 2005

Gilles Tiberghien, *Anthony Caro : After Olympia*, catalogue d'exposition, Paris, Musée Rodin, 2007

COLLECTIF, *Anthony Caro*, catalogue d'exposition, Angers, Musée des Beaux-Arts; Calais, Musée des Beaux-Arts; Dunkerque, Lieu d'Art et Action Contemporaine; Gravelines, Musée du Dessin et de l'Estampe originale, Edit. Roubaix, Association des conservateurs du Nord-Pas de Calais; Montreuil, Gourcuff-Gradenigo, 2008

### Works in English

Dieter Blume: *Anthony Caro. A Catalogue Raisonné, complete record of sculptures 1942-2005 in 14 volumes*. Cologne/ London/ New York/Hannover 1981-2007

Richard Whelan: *Anthony Caro*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex 1974; E P Dutton, New York, 1975. Essays by Michael Fried, Clement Greenberg, John Russell, Phyllis Tuchman

William Rubin: *Anthony Caro*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1975; Thames & Hudson, London 1975

Diane Waldman: *Anthony Caro*, Abbeville Press, New York, 1982; Phaidon Press, Oxford, 1982

Ian Barker (ed): *Aspects of Anthony Caro* exhibition catalogue, Knoedler Gallery/ Annelly Juda Fine Art, London, 1989

**Paul Moorhouse: *Anthony Caro: Sculpture towards Architecture*, Tate Gallery Publications, London, 1991**

Karen Wilkin: *Caro*, Prestel, London, 1991, photos John Riddy

Ken Johnson: *Anthony Caro: The Cascades*, Annelly Juda Fine Art, London & André Emmerich Gallery, New York 1991

**Giovanni Carandente: *Anthony Caro*, Fabbri Editori, Sonzogno 1992**

Shigeo Anzai: *Caro by Anzai*, photo-essay, Fuso Publishing Inc, Tokyo, 1992

Giovanni Carandente: *Caro at the Trajan Markets*, Rome, Lund Humphries, London, 1993

Clement Greenberg: *Modernism with a Vengeance, 1957-1969* (Collected Essays, ed. John O'Brian, Volume 4), Chicago University Press, Chicago & London 1993

**Julius Bryant & John Spurling: *The Trojan War: Sculptures by Anthony Caro*, Lund Humphries, London, 1994; reprinted 1997 in *English and Greek***

Julie Summers: *The Caros, a creative partnership: Sheila Girling and Anthony Caro*, Friends of the Chesil Gallery, Portland 1996

Tim Marlow: *Anthony Caro*, Openluchtmuseum voor Beeldhouwkunst Middelheim, Antwerp 1997, in Dutch and English

Michael Fried: *Art and Objecthood*, Essays and Reviews, University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London 1998

John Golding: *Caro at the National Gallery: Sculpture from Painting*, National Gallery, London, 1998

**Ian Barker (ed): *The Last Judgement: Sculpture by Anthony Caro*, Museum Würth/Verlag Paul Swiridoff, 1999. Essays by Peter Baelz, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Nadine Gordimer, Robert Hinde, Philip Rylands, John Spurling, photos David Buckland**

**Second edition with additional essays by Francisco Calvo Serraller and Giovanni Carandente, in German and English, 2001**

Giovanni Carandente: *Anthony Caro and Twentieth-Century Sculpture*, Museum Würth/Verlag Paul Swiridoff, 1999

Andrew Dempsey: *Sculptors Talking: Anthony Caro - Eduardo Chillida, Art of This Century*, Paris, 2000

Elliott, Ann: *A Sculptor's Development: Anthony Caro*, Sculpture Exhibitions Ltd, Lewes, 2000

**Richard Morphet: *Anthony Caro: Duccio Variations, Gold Blocks, Concerto Pieces*, Marlborough Gallery, New York, 2001**

**Peter Murray: *Caro at Longside - Sculpture and Sculpture*, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, 2001**

**M Caro, E Juncosa, P Subiros & E Trias: *Anthony Caro: Drawing in Space/The Last Judgement*, Fundacio Caixa Catalunya, Barcelona, 2002**

Dave Hickey: *The Barbarians*, Mitchell-Innes & Nash/Annelly Juda Fine Art, New York & London, 2002

Ian Barker: *Anthony Caro: Europa and the Bull & Paper Book Sculptures exhibition catalogue*, Annelly Juda Fine Art, London, 2003

**Ian Barker: *Anthony Caro : Quest for the New Sculpture*, Lund Humphries, London, 2004**

**Julius Bryant: *Anthony Caro : A Life in Sculpture*, Merrell Publishers, London, 2004**

Paul Moorhouse: *Interpreting Caro*, Tate Gallery Publications, London 2005

Paul Moorhouse (ed): *Anthony Caro*, exhibition catalogue, Tate Gallery Publications, London 2005

Consuelo Ciscar & Andrew Dempsey (ed) : *Anthony Caro*, IVAM Institut Valencia d'Art Modern 2005

Ciscar Casaban (ed): *The Barbarians*, IVAM, Valencia, 2006

Ian Barker (ed): *Anthony Caro: New Galvanised Steel Sculptures*, Annelly Juda Fine Art, London and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York, 2007

«Chapel of light» a work of art for the church Saint-Jean-Baptiste of Bourbourg  
October 11<sup>th</sup> 2008



# Cultural mediation

## WAITING FOR CARO...

From 1st May to 11 October 2008

Around the public commission and to make as many people as possible interested in the work of Anthony Caro, the SIVOM of Aa has organized a programme cultural mediation.

### > Art workshops - during school hours - for children

In partnership with the museum of Drawing and Original Prints at Gravelines, the SIVOM of Aa has been organizing art workshops since May 1. They have been in the schools in the SIVOM area (Bourbourg, Saint George sur Aa, Craywick, Gravelines and Loon-Plage). A succession of workshops has been taking place in the school establishments by mediators from the museum. Each session raised a question about the artist's practice:

« the weight of the earth », « sheet to volume », « the suspended object », « the relationship with monumental architecture », « from painting to volume ». This is a very concrete way of working, starting from a particular practice, and then experimenting, testing, feeling, questioning.

### > A tale at Bourbourg - during the summer holidays – open to all members of the public

« The idea creating of a story about the town of Bourbourg stemmed from a wish to make people perceive the work of Caro as part of the continuity of the history of the town and its church.(...)»

This is why officials of the town have decided to collect the oral history of the inhabitants of Bourbourg for use as a basis for the town's story.

This work was carried out over the summer by "groups of young reporters" made up of children at the leisure centre of Bourbourg. Accompanied by an adult journalist, they went to meet Bourbourgeois to hear «their» story of Bourbourg. So all these anecdotes, both funny and sad were passed on by the young children to professional storytellers. The writing of the story was then undertaken. »

### > In the week before the inauguration – general public

For the week before the official opening, the Bourbourgeois are invited to discover the work « Chapel of light » during guided tours of the church at Bourbourg. They can come and listen to the story of their town and the « voice » of the artist.

## THE PROJECTS

### • Project for a film – October 2008

In collaboration with Le Fresnoy – Studio national des arts contemporains at Tourcoing (59), the SIVOM de l'Aa has commissioned a film which traces the different stages in the creative project for the work «Chapel of Light ». This film, made by Alain Fleischer, will be an essential tool to understand the artist's work and the public commission.

### • Project for an information centre – 2009-2010

In conjunction with the public commission at Bourbourg, the site of the former « Halle aux poissons » (rue de Dunkerque – rue Pasteur), a listed building, will be renovated. This space will be the information centre for Caro's work at Bourbourg. The aim will be to give visitors the tools to understand the sculptor's work.

## ART WORKSHOPS, « WAITING FOR CARO...»

Target: Schools towns in the SIVOM of Aa (Gravelines, Saint Georges, Bourbourg, Craywick, Loon-Plage)

Average length of class: 1:30, free, group of 10 to 30 people

In partnership with the Museum of Gravelines, SIVOM of Aa

- THE WEIGHT OF THE EARTH

At the start of his career Caro used traditional methods to model form. In sculptures from the 50s which are still figurative, he used basic forms: they no longer correspond to the needs of the sculpture as a codified representation of the human body: forms rest on others, acting as counterweights, balancing each other. The workshop will highlight the way the weight of the body is expressed by the material, and the malleability of clay which keeps traces of the maker's body and hands.

- FROM SHEET TO VOLUME

In Caro's works the basic materials are often two-dimensional at the outset, whether it be sheet metal or a sheet of paper. He forms it, makes a volume, by assembling, by twisting ... Caro has often experimented with sculptures on paper. The workshop starts with sheets of different materials, letting the participants experience how sculptor can build volumes using the constraints of having to perform certain actions: knotting together, rolling up, assembling, twisting

- THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GROUND

Starting in the 60s, Caro placed his heavy metal sculptures directly on the ground, removing plinths to make his sculptures enter the viewer's space. However Caro reversed the idea for smaller works. They are naturally created on a workbench, and logically are not presented on the ground. He chose to place them on the edge of a table, which changed the shape of the sculpture. At the workshop, everyone will build a structure in cardboard on a table. The different aspects of this type of sculpture will be studied (including the forms below the level of table top).

- SUBJECT SUSPENDED

The sculptors who use iron struggle with gravity and suspend forms. Anthony Caro sometimes integrates prefabricated industrial materials and objects (beams, metal) in his sculptures. At the workshop, prefabricated forms and mass produced objects will be used to make structures. It will be seen that the attachment points are sometimes invisible, depending on your point of view.

- THE RELATIONSHIP TO MONUMENTAL ARCHITECTURE

Caro has often treated the relationship between sculpture and architecture. Of the many monuments he has visited he was particularly inspired by the cathedral at Chartres, by Greek Indian and Mexican architecture. When Caro is installing a sculpture in a space, he uses a model of the sculpture and shows visitors to scale using figurines. At the workshop, a model of a sculpture inspired by monumental architecture will be made. Thanks to the scale figures a relationship to humans will be established: we will consider different scales, the place of visitors (inside or outside the sculpture), the concept of the open and closed (seeing through things, passages).

- FROM PAINT TO VOLUME

From the start of his career Caro was influenced by painting and he transposed famous paintings (Rubens, Manet, Picasso,...) into sculptures. The workshop repeats the process, using the same paintings as starting points. At the end of the session participants will discover Caro's sculptures.

## A TALE OF BOURBOURG

Contemporary art raises questions and sometimes shocks... Very quickly the inevitable question arises : «Why is it here? »...«Chapel of light »by Sir Anthony Caro in the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste Bourbourg is no exception to this rule. Burnt down in May 1940 during the terrible struggles at the Battle of Dunkirk, the Church at Bourbourg was abandoned after the war due to a lack of means. Later, residents and elected municipal officials managed start work on the renovation of the building and the choice was made to restore its barrel vault and reveal the beauty of the original materials. The choir, whose liturgical furniture and ornaments had disappeared, had lost much of its sacred aura and was hidden from view by an imposing brick wall. The Bourbourgeois have since longed to rediscover «the heart» of their church.

Because «Chapel of light» goes against usual aesthetic choices for the renovation of a place of worship, some locals have had serious misgivings about the project. Yet, far from serving as a simple structure for a work by one of the greatest contemporary sculptors, the work aims to breathe new life into the choir, giving it a new attributes and a new function. Sir Anthony Caro has written a new page in the life of the church, building on and extending its history. The idea of creating a story around Bourbourg came out of a wish to present Caro's work as a continuation of the town's history and his church. To the question: «Why put that here? » the story will have an answer: «the destruction of the church in 1940 was a tragic page in the history of Bourbourg, this is the history that a famous artist wants to draw on today to revive the building." Unlike the work of historians, the story may be based on historical facts but create a «imagined history» around them, a history where all the elements of the town's identity come together as if by magic in the same narrative continuity, with «Chapel of light» as the most recent event.

Writing the tale becomes all the more stimulating as lets the Bourbourgeois express themselves. The aim is to collect everything they know or have heard about the church. All their personal stories will be revealed, about their family or legends connected with the place of worship. Old people still argue over the exact causes of the fire which ravaged the church on May 25 1940; their children admit having fun and games in the ruins of the building, the youngest have stories they have been told about the giant bell ringer Gideon and his family.

That is why the elected representatives of the town have started collecting the oral history of the inhabitants of Bourbourg to serve as a basis the account. This work has been carried out during the summer by "young reporters» made up of children in the leisure centre. Helped by a journalist, they met the Bourbourgeois to hear "their» history of Bourbourg. All these anecdotes, both funny and sad, will be passed on in their turn by the young reporters to storytellers. The writing of a story can then go ahead. The week before the official opening of the choir, the town people will listen to «their»story when they are invited to the church, before discovering «Chapel of light» by Caro. Thereafter, the storytellers will be replaced by arts mediators: the question «Why is it here? » will be followed by «What is the work about?». But that is another story.

Edouard ROOSE  
Regional committee for Tourism

# Our partners

## Ministry of Culture and Communication

Public commissions, a tool serving a community

Public commissions show the state's willingness, in conjunction with many partners (local institutions, public or private collaborators) to contribute to the enriching of life for people and the developing of national heritage by placing works of art outside institutions specialized in displaying contemporary art.

It also seeks to give artists a tool to create projects whose ambition, importance and scale require out-of-the-ordinary means.

The public commission in this sense designates an object. This artwork is taken to meet people where they live. It enters public spaces, leaving the places usually reserved for it. But it is also a process which is marked by a series of stages, from the initiative taken by the person who commissions it to the creating of a work by the artist and its reception by the public.

Created in 1983 under the auspices of the Centre National des Arts Plastiques, the Fund for Public Commissions is a means of attributing specific funds which correspond to a wish to widen the public for contemporary art and encourage artists to create unusual or experimental works in relationship with architecture, urban planning or the landscape.

This policy is also a way of enriching the visual perception of the social space, thanks to exchanges of ideas and questions asked by contemporary creative artists.

This committed, ambitious initiative, coordinated with local authorities, has given a new lease of life to public art. Present in a range of spaces, both urban and rural, in gardens and historical monuments, using both sites which attract tourists and new spaces or the Internet, contemporary art in public spaces uses an extraordinary variety of ways of expressing art and a range of artistic disciplines: from sculpture to design, from applied arts to new medias, from photography to graphic arts, without forgetting gardens, landscapes, light and video.

The ways in which public commissions act have also evolved. The notion of the functional in relation to a work is no longer rejected; interventions can at times have an ephemeral nature (on a decor or a part of an event) giving rise to a significant, rich or unusual experience, changing the way space is perceived.

Olivier KAEPPÉLIN  
Delegate for visual arts  
Ministry of Culture and Communication

## Nord - Pas de Calais Regional council

At the heart of creation lies peace

At the time when its opulence, nature's generosity and a clement climate made Flanders a land of plenty and ideal place for painters, trade flourished. Merchants from all across Europe passed through our territory and went back to where they came amazed.

With the discovery of coal, the development of the whole region was taken in hand by its workers. Then the first factory in France carefully wove the hope of a better world: many important figures in the struggle for the emancipation of workers were born, lived, and served as elected officials in the Nord - Pas de Calais.

Here, in the first half of the twentieth century, men from all over the world came to fight and die for their cause. First from 1914 to 1918, and a second time between 1939 and 1945, our region was devastated by violent battles. Our land still keeps the memory of those sacrificed generations alive. Bourbourg, with its choir in flames, is a symbol of the bleeding world, of Europe losing its head.

In May 1940, during the Battle of Dunkirk, the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste was bombed. Fire destroyed the building, the roof collapsed. The biggest Gothic choir north of Paris was devastated.

Today, after several attempts at restoration we can celebrate peace with the reunification of the church and the installation of sculptures by the British artist Sir Anthony Caro. His talent is a hymn to the faith of those who have believed in this project from the outset. Contemporary art works always take one by surprise. Some viewers are shocked, other are enchanted. We remain however governed by a determination which at other times and in other places, has allowed the greatest artists to remain important down the centuries.

The work at Bourbourg is a way for the SIVOM of Aa, the Communauté Urbaine de Dunkerque, Conseil Régional Nord – Pas de Calais and the French State to reinforce the European Union by issuing a message of peace to the world. Together, we can have faith in art. While a new chapter in the story of our region cultural life will soon open with the Louvre-Lens, «Chapel of light» by Sir Anthony Caro closes a tragic chapter in our history and makes memories, creative energy and peace echo within each of us.

Daniel PERCHERON  
Senator of Pas-de-Calais  
President of Nord - Pas de Calais Regional council

## Urban community of Dunkirk

The force of art with Anthony Caro

Introduction to the Dunkerque area – a site playing host to contemporary creation.

Resulting from collaboration between many public and private figures and bodies in the area, the public commission for Anthony Caro in the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste Bourbourg is in itself a crucial artistic event for all those in the Dunkerque region. The «Chapel of light» in the Gothic choir of the church will soon be recognized as one of the major sites for art north of Paris. Local people and those in the region should be able to make the work their own thanks to the presence in the area of experts in the mediation of contemporary art. A work of contemporary art in a holy place can be misunderstood but these reactions which often originate in genuine emotions caused by the profound truth of an artwork.

It is thus clear that one of the challenges is to accompany the visitor when he is faced with such a powerful expression by an artist. In any case, it is one of the merits of the organizers of this exceptional project to have chosen a work of contemporary creation which is so challenging.

The Communauté urbaine in Dunkerque have given their wholehearted support to the promotion of cultural creation, even in its more surprising and even disturbing aspects. In this respect a public commission – with the French State as guarantor and partner – provides the right framework to accompany local authorities in the arts field.

It is also worth recalling that at the beginning of 80s there was a major movement of decentralization. The French State chose to promote the visual arts in France by putting in place the Regional Fund for Contemporary Art. This coincided with the inauguration of the musée Matisse at Le Cateau - Cambrésis. History can repeat itself and here at Bourbourg in 2008 we are celebrating an exemplary achievement that enriches the national and artistic heritage. We owe this gift to an artist, Anthony Caro, at the summit of his art as Henri Matisse was in 1951 when he created his work for the Chapel of the Rosary in Vence.

And so it is perhaps not a coincidence that at this moment in the life of a region, a group of professionals have been mobilised to honour the whole career of a leading British sculptor with a major retrospective which will take place in the museums of Dunkerque, Gravelines and Calais. Tomorrow, beyond this major event, the whole of the Dunkerque administrative district, in liaison with the FRAC, will confirm its capacity to welcome contemporary art and to show it to its full advantage. To this end we can bring together two ideas from two great artists - half a century apart – but with similar constraints governing their work: first Anthony Caro: « I had to respect the architecture in place, without letting myself be dominated by it», then Henri Matisse: « I only have a small space, I want to give it an infinite dimension. »

Michel DELEBARRE

Former Minister

Député-Mayor

President of the Urban Community of Dunkirk

## Jean-Pierre DECOOL, Deputy of Nord

You can understand my sensitivity towards anything to do with my hometown, especially when it comes to the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste: after all it has made the «children of Bourbourg» welcome at different stages of their life. Through its architecture and its imposing dimensions, Bourbourg's church stands out from the uniformity of the coastal plains of Flanders. This beautiful building was up until recently in a poor state, maimed by the bombing of May 1940. After 1955 the nave and transept were restored, but the choir has remained closed to worship for over fifty years. Even these days this absence is felt by parishioners and the rest of the local population. For just over ten years the clergy, the Association of Friends of Saint-Jean-Baptiste, the town, local and state services have all worked towards making the church whole again. This desire involved the removal of the partition wall with the choir and the installation of artworks by the sculptor, world famous, Sir Anthony Caro.

I am involved in this project for two main reasons: firstly the wish to see over half a century after the Second World War, the complete restoration of the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste. The damage of war is still there, the healing process has been long and drawn out. At this precise moment, I am thinking about the many contacts to complete this project, the trips to Bourbourg with the Mayor, the SIVOM de l'Aa and other numerous partners: at the Préfecture or the Regional Council at Lille, at London, Matignon and the Elysée. It needed a lot of goodwill for this exceptional public commission to see the light of day.

The second reason, artistic this time, leads me to share some thoughts with you. The collaborators on this project are well aware that bringing a work of art and a modern one at that into a church always creates a stir. Yet it is obvious that artistic creation is always contemporary otherwise we would only be using copies as sculptures! In this context, Anthony Caro's «Chapel of light» develops the harmony between culture and a respect due to a place of worship.

In Caro's work there is clearly a remarkable adaptation of the work and the liturgical furniture to the architecture of the site. A few miles and a few years away in 2012 London will be the symbol of brotherhood between peoples. «Chapel of light» will be an international event marking the beginning of the twenty-first century, reinforcing the innovative and peace-loving side of the human race ... Future generations will be able to judge the work for themselves!

Jean-Pierre DECOOL  
Deputy-Mayor of Brouckerque  
General counselor of canton de Bourbourg

## The Sivom de l'Aa

In charge of the public commission for Anthony Caro

The SIVOM of Aa, the group of towns of which I have been at the head of since 2001, agreed to take responsibility for carrying out the public commission for Sir Anthony Caro's restoration of the choir in the Gothic church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste. They were mandated by the French State and requested by the town of Bourbourg, represented by its Mayor Francis Bassemon. We were confident and aware of the importance and the unique nature of the project, although the SIVOM of Aa could not quite imagine what a rich adventure it would turn out to be and all the challenges which would be involved. This project has managed to bring together many public and private groups: Europe, the French State, the Region, the Urban Community of Dunkirk, the town of Bourbourg, the Church, the Association of Friends of Saint-Jean-Baptiste and other patrons. All of them were united in a common energy to work together to provide a place which brings reconciliation, beauty and uplifts the soul, and to create a haven of peace and humanity for future visitors.

The project has also led architects, engineers and many companies to surpass themselves in their respective fields of expertise to find the right solutions to satisfy Anthony Caro's perfectionism. The project has also prompted representatives of government and religious institutions to show their audacity and innovative spirit by placing a baptistery in a choir area and putting a modern, monumental art work in a Gothic building. But the history of the territory covered by the SIVOM of Aa, located in the triangle formed by Calais, Dunkerque and Saint-Omer has taught it to deal with a large number of events and has given it the energy and will to undertake innovations in the field of industry, energy and sport but also in the domains of culture and art. For example 30 years ago now, just round the corner from Bourbourg, the beautiful fortified town of Gravelines, governed by Albert Denver (Mayor of Gravelines for several decades) put sculptures by contemporary artists on its fortifications to bring contemporary art into public spaces. A little later it created the only French museum devoted to drawings and original prints in the fort's arsenal and built up collections of both traditional and contemporary graphic arts of international importance. Nearby, the town of Dunkerque set up its museum and sculpture garden dedicated to modern art, now the Lieu d'Art et Action contemporaine (LAAC) on the site of wartime batteries.

Put simply this territory is both proud of its roots and steeped in modernity. It brings life to its heritage in which it reinvests for future generations while respecting history and the public interest. As such, it can aspire to the official designation of Pays d'Art et d'Histoire (Art and History Region). It is not surprising in this context that the encounter between an artist of Anthony Caro's reputation and a church of the architectural quality of Bourbourg could produce a major art event and a work whose impact will go beyond initial expectations. The inhabitants of the SIVOM of Aa region and their elected representatives welcome this auspicious gift, a group of sculptures that will be a credit to the entire Nord - Pas de Calais region.

Bertrand RINGOT

Vice - President of the Urban Community of Dunkirk

Mayor of Gravelines

President of the SIVOM de l'Aa and Bourbourg/Gravelines

Church Saint-Jean-Baptiste of Bourbourg

24

I.D of SIVOM de l'Aa:  
Name : SIVOM de l'Aa  
Status : Etablissement Public de Coopération Intercommunale  
Représenté by : Bertrand Ringot, President of SIVOM de l'Aa and Mayor of Gravelines  
Cities united: Bourbourg, Craywick, Gravelines, Loon-Plage et Saint Georges sur l'Aa  
Population : about 27 000 inhabitants



## The town of Bourbourg

### Anthony Caro at Bourbourg

The church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste is one of the most beautiful buildings in our region, notably due to its magnificent Gothic vault. The thirteenth century choir is a listed Historical Monument.

Before discovering the church at Bourbourg, British artist Anthony Caro was represented at the Venice Biennale at the by his sculpture cycle the Last Judgement (1995-1999). During his first visit, he was struck by the scale of the choir and the weight of historical memory connecting it to the events of the Second World War. This strong imprint left by history in the very stones of the church, devastated by fire in May 1940 and scarred by passing time, is a major factor in inspiring Anthony Caro to show commitment and enthusiasm for seven years. He has found here a place for inspiration and expression which corresponds to his personal evolution. Therefore the artist started work on a project to make a Gothic choir into a chapel of hope and a place of meditation open to all. Since 2001 when the public commission was launched Anthony Caro has been working with passion on what could be his masterpiece.

Born in 1924, Caro was the last assistant to Henry Moore in the early 50s. He remains today one of the key figures in English and international sculpture. After a brief stay in the USA, he was awarded major prizes for sculpture in Paris, Sao Paulo, New York, Tokyo, Barcelona and London. His itinerary over the last 60 years has led him to explore the relationship between sculpture and architecture. He knows the work of Le Corbusier and Utzon, and has worked in collaboration with Foster and Gehry. Knowledge of architecture has informed his sensitive approach to the Church of Bourbourg. It is a unique opportunity for our town to become host to one of the major artists of our time. I can only hope that this meeting will be seen as comparable to that of Matisse with the Chapel of the Rosary in Vence in 1947.

The Sivom des Rives de l'Aa is in charge of this magnificent project. From Gravelines to Bourbourg via Loon-Plage, Craywick, Saint-Georges sur Aa, the towns in the Sivom have come together to form a lively group to encourage culture and tourism, combining tradition and modernity, proud of its roots, but at the same time open to the world. The project is a veritable motor for tourism and economic development in the Flandres Maritimes and represents a major public commission will create a pole of attraction for art on an international scale. The French state, the clergy, local elected officials, the Sivom des Rives de l'Aa, the Conseil Régional, the Communauté Urbaine de Dunkerque, the British Council and the Friends of Saint-Jean-Baptiste have all worked together on this site with this exceptional artist.

Since 2001, my many discussions with Anthony Caro allowed me to judge the exceptional aspect of the work at Bourbourg and this is why I would sincerely like to thank all those who have helped me and have expressed their unwavering support for this project carried out by a major artist of international stature.

Francis BASSEMON  
Communitary counselor  
Vice - President the SIVOM de l'Aa and Bourbourg/Gravelines  
Mayor of Bourbourg

## Archdiocese of Lille

### A new life for the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste

In 1997 a restoration project for the choir was begun by Regional department for cultural affairs for the Nord - Pas de Calais (DRAC). It was quickly taken up by the Friends of Saint-Jean-Baptiste (particular gratitude is due to the dedication its late chairman, Mr Andrew Violier who, with other members of the Association, worked so that this religious building be reborn from its ashes). The project has led to a public commission of appropriate importance given the historical and architectural interest of the site. The diocese of Lille, represented by its bishop Monseigneur Gérard Defois, has also been involved in the planning.

Sir Anthony Caro responded favourably to the DRAC's request. A major figure in English sculpture, he was deeply touched by the tragic destiny of the abandoned choir in the church at Bourbourg, and enthusiastically agreed to take part in reinvigorating this space.

Today, ten years later, the work is in its last phase. Anthony Caro is now 84 years old. He has accomplished the work with an energy that has never faltered. When the Gothic choir is given back to the citizens of Bourbourg, what will they discover?

The choir will become a place of worship again and will be used for the celebration of baptism, the first act of Christian initiation. This was Bishop Defois's idea with the Diocesan Commission for Sacred Art. Mr. André Violier and the Friends of Saint-Jean-Baptiste immediately agreed. Thus Anthony Caro has built a monumental baptistery in the choir area for the baptism of children and adults by ablution (water poured on the forehead) and also by immersion, as was practiced in the first Christian communities. A kind of new life will start for this church which is now reunited, a veritable renaissance.

To complete the restoration of the Gothic choir, Anthony Caro has also produced new liturgical furniture which will be set up in the transept: a stone altar, a cross, a pulpit for the proclamation of sacred texts, a tabernacle.

The next step will be at the weekend of the 11 and 12 October 2008 - the blessing and the consecration of the new liturgical furniture by the archbishop of Lille.

In addition to its religious dimension, this event will have a major cultural impact. The church at Bourbourg can be proud to house the works of an artist who is internationally recognized, worthy of its rich history and most its venerated host, Notre-Dame de Bourbourg herself.

Monseigneur Laurent ULRICH  
Arc bishop of Lille

# Financing the project

## WORK ON THE CHOIR (HISTORIC MONUMENT FROM 16 MARCH 1920) CHURCH OF SAINT-JEAN-BAPTISTE DE BOURBOURG

The Regional department for cultural affairs for the Nord - Pas de Calais began restoration of interior of the choir in the 2002-2003 (cleaning masonry, restoring the stonework and joints) and the restoration of the windows in the choir, reinforcing the structure of the northern entrance of the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Bourbourg for a total of 365 000 €, financed 250 000 € by the state and 115 000 € by the commune of Bourbourg. For its 2005 expenses 300 000 € was required in order to finish work on the ground and remove the partition wall. The site has had to take the wishes of the artist into account (concrete floor, adapting to the work etc. ...) as well as need to preserve archaeological remains, and install heating as required by the Town of Bourbourg. Work was due to be completed on August 5, 2006, but was prolonged six times because of adjustments due to the installation of the art work and the heating system. It was only completed in July 2008. In financial terms additional costs of 40 000 € were paid for in full by the State. The total investment of the State (Direction régionale des affaires culturelles Nord - Pas de Calais) in the historical monument represented 590 000 €.

## THE PUBLIC COMMISSION: CHAPEL OF LIGHT

The public commission represents a total cost (including costs associated with installing the artwork) of 2 251 293 €. It includes: the design, delivery and installation pieces for the work, the purchase of materials (wood, steel, concrete) contracting and work on the lighting and design of the work, the supply and installation of the glass wall ensuring the transition from the baptismal space (choir) to the area for celebration (the transept).

## THE LITURGICAL FURNITURE

The Association of Friends of Saint-Jean-Baptiste, in close collaboration with officials from the diocese of Lille and the SIVOM d'Aa, commissioned Sir Anthony Caro to make liturgical furniture (altar, the crucifix etc) for the transept, where religious ceremonies will take place and will lead into the choir where the main work is situated. This will cost 130 000 €.

## PUBLIC FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PUBLIC COMMISSION FROM:

The French state - Ministry of Culture and Communication (Delegation of visual arts / Regional department for cultural affairs for the Nord - Pas de Calais) 450 000 €.

European Union - European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 628 400 €. Nord – Pas de Calais Regional council 500 000 €.

SIVOM de l'Aa 482 893 €.

Urban Community of Dunkirk 150 000 €.

Parliamentary reserve from the D.M JP DECOOL : 40 000 €.

This operation has also received financial support from :

The FILUDU Foundation for the liturgical furniture,

The SOTRASEN company for work on the baptistery,

LEROY MERLIN, in partnership with Tourville Development who supplied the wood. Anthony Caro, creator of the work, worked with assistance of an architect,

Pierre Bernard and engineer specialist in «structuring», Marc Malinowsky.

The SIVOM de l' Aa was in charge of overseeing the public commission.

«Chapel of light» a work of art for the church Saint-Jean-Baptiste of Bourbourg

October 11<sup>th</sup> 2008

# The territory and the context for tourism

For its visitors the Nord-Pas de Calais region, situated a few nautical miles from the English coast, is completely atypical.

Its geographical localization between England, the Benelux and Germany makes it a crossroads in Europe where several important pages of a common history have been written.

Industries and fertile lands have marked this territory. The Nord-Pas de Calais has been fought over, invaded, conquered but over and above the roar of battle, the clash of cultures has conferred on the region a rare capacity for assimilating the best from other civilizations while guarding its own identity.

Today the Nord-Pas de Calais is the main urban area in France after the Paris region, with 4.5 million inhabitants. This tremendous concentration of people has given rise to prosperous and lively cities where a unique atmosphere reigns. Traditions are preserved and aid the warmth and openness of the people of the north of France. The generosity and cordial welcome are present in a «savoir-vivre ensemble» (living together in harmony) and in the local dishes, simple and without frills, naturally attached to the land and its best produce.

The Nord-Pas de Calais region is multi-faceted and invites us to travel thanks to the waterways which are ever present, thanks to the composed but ever-changing landscapes, thanks to the spectacle of its ever-fresh colours, thanks to the richness of its ever-remarkable architectural wealth.

This calm region engenders certain nonchalance, abandonment, simplicity, communion with nature and others, and leads one to share their enjoyment of parties with the inhabitants. Here is a spirit straight out of a Brueghel painting, with its carnivals, its festivals like the « braderie » and the parade of giants,...

Where can you find us? To find out more visit  
[www.tourisme-nordpasdecalais.fr](http://www.tourisme-nordpasdecalais.fr)  
[www.tourisme-gravelines.fr](http://www.tourisme-gravelines.fr)

# Practical information

## National and international press:

Agence Observatoire - Véronique  
Janneau - [www.observatoire.fr](http://www.observatoire.fr)  
2, rue Mouton Duvernet, 75014 Paris  
T. +331 43 54 87 71 / F. +339 59 38 87 71  
Aurélie Cadot :  
[aureliecadot@observatoire.fr](mailto:aureliecadot@observatoire.fr)

## English and nederland press:

Brunswick Arts Consulting LLP -  
[www.brunswickgroup.com](http://www.brunswickgroup.com)  
16 Lincoln's Inn Fields - London WC2A  
3ED  
Phone +44 20 7936 1290  
Fax +44 20 7936 1299  
UK Press - Nicolas Smirnoff  
[anthonycaropress@brunswickgroup.com](mailto:anthonycaropress@brunswickgroup.com)  
T. + 44 20 7936 1275  
Mobile +44 791 295 2275  
BENELUX Press - Rhiannon Pickles  
[rhiannonpickles@mac.com](mailto:rhiannonpickles@mac.com)  
T. +44 20 7096 8809  
Mobile +31 6158 21202

## For the public commission :

Ministry of Culture and  
Communication - Delegation of visual arts  
Marie Christine Hergott, in charge of  
communication  
T. +33 1 40 15 75 23  
[marie-christine.hergott@culture.gouv.fr](mailto:marie-christine.hergott@culture.gouv.fr)

## Regional press:

DRAC Nord - Pas de Calais  
Information, Communication  
Yves Ledun - T. +33 3 28 36 62 35  
[yves.ledun@culture.gouv.fr](mailto:yves.ledun@culture.gouv.fr)  
SIVOM de l'Aa - T. +33 3 28 24 99 76  
[Projet.caro@ville-gravelines.fr](mailto:Projet.caro@ville-gravelines.fr)

## GETTING TO B O U R B O U R G

### BY ROAD

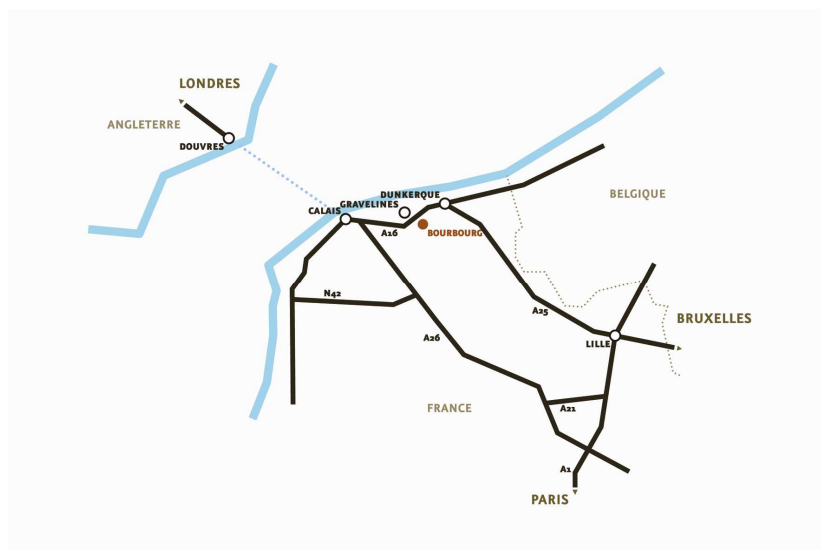
A 26 motorway, follow Dunkerque, A 16 motorway exit 52  
A25, follow Calais, A 16 motorway exit 52  
>From London: the Channel Tunnel: 155 km / time : 2:30  
>From Brussels: 172 km / time 1:50  
>From Amsterdam: 364 km / time : 3:45  
>From Luxembourg: 388 km / time : 3:55  
>From Paris: 281 km / time : 3:00  
>From Lille: 86 km / time : 1:00  
>From St Omer: 30 km / time : 35 mn  
>From Dunkerque: 20 km / time : 20 mn  
>From Calais: 29 km / time : 25 mn

### BY RAIL

>train Amsterdam / Lille: time : 4h  
>Eurostar Calais Frethun / London: time : 1h  
>Brussels Eurostar via Lille: time : 2h  
>Train Brussels / Lille: time : 35 min  
>TGV Paris Nord / Dunkerque: time 1h30 / 2h  
>TER Lille / Dunkerque: time : 30min / 1h  
>TER-Calais Dunkerque / Dunkerque-Calais(Bourbourg):  
time 20 min

### BY PLANE

Lille-Lesquin Airport  
Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport  
Brussels Airport



«Chapel of light» a work of art for the church Saint-Jean-Baptiste of Bourbourg  
October 11<sup>th</sup> 2008