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18th International Panorama Conference in cooperation with The Royal Museum of Armed Forces and Military History, Brussels / Belgium, March 29 – 31 and April 1st

The 18th IPC Conference 29–31 March in Brussels, Belgium, was a well attended and highly appreciated event. The conference was dedicated to the theme 'Panorama Redevelopment: Restoration and Repositioning, with focus on the Panorama of the Battle of Yser (1920-21), by Alfred Bastien'.

On 29 March the participants were welcomed in the Museum headquarters at Jubel Park in Brussels by **Dominique Hanson**, the General Director of the Museum, and by IPC president **Ernst Storm**.

On **30 March** the conference attendants were guided to an army base close to Brussels where the Royal Museum of Armed Forces and Military History had unrolled its panorama and diorama paintings. After an introduction the first lecture was given by **Isabelle Leroy** on the Panorama of the Battle of the Yser and its artist Alfred Bastien. Following this, the Senior Curator of the Museum **Piet De Gryse** informed on the history of the Panorama of the Yser in the Royal Museum of the Armed Forces and of Military History after 1950. The participants then had an once in a lifetime chance to visit the unrolled Panorama of the Battle of the Yser, the Panorama du Congo, the Diorama of the Battle of the Meuse and the Diorama Manoeuvre at Kontich. This last diorama is a real re-discovery. The museum didn't even know that this painting was stored with the others. After the visit a vital discussion started on the next steps for the conservation of those four paintings.

On **31 March** the director general of the Royal Institute for Art **Myriam Serck-Dewaide** gave an introduction and information on the panorama documentation held by the institute. She added remarks on the future prospects of the Panorama of the Battle of the Yser. IPC Secretary **Patrick Deicher** held an introductory lecture with an overview on panorama restoration and repositioning campaigns of recent decades. Polish conservator **Ryszard Wójtowicz** who has worked

on the panoramas Wroclaw/Poland, Szeged/Hungary and Gettysburg/USA held a presentation on the planning of a restoration campaign and on organizing a post care of the conserved panorama by its owner. **Christian Marty**, the head of conservation teams on panoramas Bourbaki/Switzerland and Innsbruck/Austria informed about the 2008 finished restoration campaign in Lucerne and the planned transfer of the panorama Innsbruck into a new museum building. **Ulrich Weillhammer**, a former member of the conservation teams of panoramas Murten/Switzerland, Bourbaki/Switzerland and Altoetting/Germany informed on the conservation of the panorama of the Battle of Murten in preparation for a few months presentation at the Swiss National Exhibition in 2002. The panorama is back in storage now. During the lunch break **Michel Dusariez**, a member of the International Association of Panorama Photographers IAPP, took a 360° panorama photograph of the participants. The section with presentations on restoration aspects was closed by **Marcin Kozarzewski** and **Katarzyna Górecka** with their lecture on the restoration of large big-size pre-panoramic paintings from St. Lawrence's collegiate church in Zhovkva/Ukraine. In the historical section of the conference, two panorama historians presented more historical panorama-related aspects. **Evelyn Onnes** gave an overview about the history of military panoramas in general. **Isabelle Leroy** informed on Brussels as the capital of panoramas in 19th and early 20th centuries. The last presentations of the conference were made by **Rob van den Braak**. He talked about the opening of the new Amazonia panorama at Leipzig on March 27 and on a planned panorama magazine (see below). The conference ended with a plenary discussion on the on the tasks for the Royal Museum of the Armed Forces and Military History challenges for concerning their panorama and diorama paintings.

On **1 April** a short post-conference trip was organised to Braine l'Alleud to visit the panorama of the Battle of Waterloo which is the first panorama on a tentative list for UNESCO World Heritage. **Yves Vander Cruisen** and the responsible architect **Mr. Dupont** described the recently finished restoration works on the building. A restoration campaign on the panorama painting and the foreground are to be started in the next few years. Back in Brussels the former panorama building at Av. Maurice Lemonnier was visited. The panorama rotunda had been transformed into a parking garage in the 1920s. The next visit was a guided tour to Japanese Tower and Chinese Pavilion close to the Royal Castles at Laeken. The Chinese Pavilion was part of the "Panorama du Tour du Monde" by Louis Dumoulin located in Paris (World fair exhibition 1900) and rebuilt in Brussels by king Léopold II. The Japanese Tower was influenced by the same panorama in Paris. The post-conference tour ended in front of the Grande Mosque at Parc du Cinquantenaire in Brussels. The Mosque is a transformed panorama

IPC International Panorama Council

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rotunda as well. The building was constructed in 1880 by Ernest van Humbeek in an arabesque style to house the Panorama of Cairo (1880-81) painted by Emile Charles Wauters (1846-1933). The building was restored in 1978 and transformed into the Grande Mosquée.

The breadth of the presentations was impressive and opened the view of the various large restoration campaigns on panoramas of recent years. The participating restorers and conservators together have written a paper with steps for the first-aid treatment of the panorama and diorama paintings in the collection of the museum. The paper was sent to the Royal Museum of Armed Forces and Military History, and the museum has received at least one more practical advice report following the conference. We hope that these papers will help the museum to prepare for taking the necessary steps. The dedicated participation of so many conservators has made this conference quite unique in the history of the yearly IPC conferences.

In his thank-you letter Ernst Storm expressed his sincere gratitude for hosting the 18th conference at the Brussels museum and the army base on such a short notice, after the cancellation of our Australian conference. All concerned, foremost Piet De Gryse and Dr. Natasja Peeters of the Army Museum, have done a great job. 'The panoramas and dioramas in the Brussels museum represent a world-wide unique and extraordinary treasure. We are fully aware that a huge amount of work must be done to save the four paintings. Yet several successful restoration projects on panoramas have shown that handling panoramas, raising funds for restoration and having them presented to the public is feasible,' he wrote on behalf of the IPC Executive Board. 'Concentration on the primary steps is necessary. We are convinced that bringing back all four paintings to the Belgian and international public is a task for generations. But early conservation work on all four is inevitable.'

Photos of the conference taken by Rob van den Braak are accessible online. Please address a message to IPC Secretariat info@panoramapainting.com to get the link. The proceedings of the conference will be published in cooperation with The Royal Museum of Armed Forces and Military History in spring 2010.

IPC conferences in 2010, 2011, 2012...

The 19th IPC conference in 2010 is planned to be in Istanbul, Turkey, hosted by the organisation of the spectacular new '1453' panorama. In 2010 Istanbul will be one of the European Cultural Capital cities. More information, including the time of the year the conference will be scheduled, will be delivered as soon as possible.

The 20th 2011 conference is expected to be on the Gettysburg Battle Ground in the United States of America and the 21st 2012 conference is expected to coincide with the 1812 Battle of Borodino jubilee in October in Moscow, Russian Federation.

The executive board of IPC is very satisfied that several potential conference hosting partners have shown interest. Besides the Kultursanat in Istanbul, the Gettysburg Foundation in Gettysburg, and the Borodino Panorama-Museum in Moscow there are four or five other IPC partner 'leads' for a future IPC conference, including even from Japan.

Jubilee festivity at Woche-Panorama Thun

The Woche-Panorama of Thun, the oldest existing 360 degree panorama painting, is celebrating the bicentennial anniversary of the start of its painting in 1809 by the Swiss artist Marquard Woche (1760-1830). The 7.5 x 38.3 meter painting was finished in 1814 and first exhibited in Basel. After the artist's death it was presented to the city of Thun as a gift. The painting was forgotten until it became possible to restore the work, thanks to the efforts of the Gottfried-Keller-Foundation. Since 1961 it has been accessible again to the public in a

specially constructed modern building in Schadaupark. It shows a view from the quays along the river Aare to Niesen, Blüemlialp, and Jungfrau peaks and back to the castle. The Art Museum of Thun, which is running the panorama museum, is now planning a new restoration campaign for the painting in its building in Park Schadau. The public jubilee festivity is initiating the collection of funds for the restoration. On June 28, 2009 an immense program of guided tours, music presentations, games for children, etc. is scheduled.

For more information please visit www.kunstmuseum-thun.ch.

Innsbruck initiatives for safeguarding the Mt. Isel Panorama in its unity

The struggle to safeguard the panorama of Mount Isel (Bergisel) in its original building is still going on. Despite strong opposition, the Government of the Land of Tyrol is still planning to transfer the painting from its actual rotunda to a new museum building. Doing so would mean the destruction of the listed 1907 real panorama rotunda and the removal of the 1896 10.3 x 103 meter painting. A private initiative in Innsbruck has collected some 2,500 signatures from citizens of Innsbruck and abroad. Among others the Green Party of Tyrol has started a petition. Last week, the parliament of the Land of Tyrol discussed the item but didn't stop the project. In the meantime, the cost estimations for the new museum and the transfer and restoration of the panorama painting are rising. Restoration specialists from Switzerland and Germany are about to make detailed plans for the transfer.

Start Panorama Mesdag restoration funding

May 2 and 3 saw a successful start of public fund raising activities at Panorama Mesdag in The Hague, Holland. Some members of the youngest generation of the panorama stockholders took the initiative of a small scale fund raising weekend, with all sorts of activities, including a Sunday brunch on the panorama platform. Guests started their day on the faux terrain dune, in the middle of the surrounding 14.7 x 114.7 meter panorama, exactly 129 years after the famous seascape painter H.W. Mesdag accepted the assignment to paint a Maritime Panorama in The Hague. He did so in 1881, together with his wife Sientje Mesdag-van Houten and a few colleagues. The result was his famous panorama of the fishermen's village of Scheveningen, the coastal part of the city of The Hague, seat of the Dutch Government and a Royal Residence.

Earlier this year the not-for-profit heritage business owned by the Mesdag and Van Houten descendants applied to the Dutch ministry of Education, Culture and Monuments for preliminary World Heritage status.

The panorama canvas is in a perfect condition, but the built facilities of the panorama fail to meet new regulations. They were built in 1880, with some additions dating from 1910. In order to raise the funding, the family faces a € 7.6 million target, of which currently a third has been secured. To fill the gap, a broad range of activities aimed at sponsoring business partners, government and private donors will be launched during the coming months. An English language introduction is available upon request at mbeckers@panorama-mesdag.com. For more information visit www.panorama-mesdag.com.

A recently re-discovered large-scale diorama painting: 'Manoeuvre at Kontich'

The Royal Museum of Armed Forces and Military History at Brussels rediscovered a large-scale Diorama painting of approximately 25 x 5 m. The painting displays a manoeuvre of the Belgian Army at the end of 19th century on the site of Kontich. It was painted by the Belgian artist Léon Abry around 1895.

The painting had been rolled and stored beside the panoramas and dioramas of the museum. Its existence became forgotten over the decades and was recently re-discovered when the museum unrolled its other panorama and diorama paintings.

Panoramist F.W. Heine diaries symposium on DVD

The Museum of Wisconsin Art is proud to announce a set with 3 DVDs on the International Panorama Symposium - *Investigating an International Treasure: The diaries of Panorama Painter F. W. Heine*. The DVD set (total running time: 5:19:58) documents the widely heralded November 1st, 2008 symposium that was held at the Museum of Wisconsin Art and the recent discoveries in Milwaukee that redefine what we know about the history of Panorama Painting. Discover the amazing history of 19th and early 20th century Panorama Painting in Milwaukee, the United States and Europe as scholars from the United States and Germany discuss the incredible stories of this once celebrated medium.

For more information or to purchase the set for \$35.00 (includes S&H), please contact the museum at +1 414 262-9638 (phone), +1 414 262-8080 (fax) or (e-mail) lgoetz@wisconsinart.org. Or send check to: Museum of Wisconsin Art, 300 south sixth Avenue, West Bend, WI 53095

Panorama Magazine presentation

On the occasion of the 18th International Panorama Conference Rob van den Braak informed about his project for an international panorama magazine. The Panorama Magazine, 24 full colour pages with news, information and articles on the panorama phenomenon, will be the bridge between panorama owners, panorama experts, panoramaniacs, sponsors, authorities, panorama visitors and the general public.

It aims to create more panorama awareness, exchange panorama knowledge, help to find sponsors and funding, connect panoramaniacs worldwide and attract more panorama visitors. To see what The Panorama Magazine may look like please visit www.panoramazine.nl. More information will follow.

Sanford Wurmfeld's E-Cyclorama on exhibition at Purchase NY, USA

Sanford Wurmfeld's E-Cyclorama opens at the Neuberger Museum, Purchase, New York from May 31 – July 19, 2009. The exhibition also includes 43 mid-sized paintings from 1971 to present. The opening reception is scheduled for June 5, 5:30-7:30 pm. All IPC members are welcome. www.neuberger.org

Sara Velas awarded

The Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts at Washington University in St. Louis honoured six outstanding architecture and art alumni on April, 23. The awards recognize graduates who have demonstrated creativity, innovation, leadership and vision through their contributions to the practices of art and architecture, as well as to Washington University and the Sam Fox School. Sara Velas of Los Angeles received the 2009 Young Alumni Award. Velas is a visual artist and founder and director of The Velaslavasay Panorama, an exhibition hall, theatre and garden in the historic Union Square area of Los Angeles, which she launched in 1999. Velas has travelled extensively, visiting 19th-century panoramas — as well as their contemporary counterpoints — throughout the United States, Europe and Asia. A member of the International Panorama Council, she has lectured extensively on her interpretation of the panoramic art form. <http://news-info.wustl.edu/news/page/normal/14007.html?emailID=23982>

Call for information on panoramas etc.

Please check our website www.panoramapainting.com and send any new information on panoramas and panorama activities and publications to the IPC Secretary: info@panoramapainting.com.