

**THE CHAPEL OF LIGHT  
ANTHONY CARO**



View of Chapel of Light from the Nave

## Chapel of Light / Choeur de lumière

The Chapel of Light has been created by Anthony Caro for the 12<sup>th</sup> Century choir of the Church of Saint Jean-Baptiste located in the small town of Bourbourg, about 12 miles east of Calais.

In 1940 during the Dunkirk evacuations the Church was severely damaged by a British pilot who was forced, to avoid causing any damage to the town, to fly his blazing plane into the roof of the Church. The Germans then removed parts of the stonework and floor from the wreckage to grind up to make an airfield. The choir sustained the worst damage, and after the war the nave of the church was restored but the arches between the Nave and the Choir were bricked up.

The question of restoring the Choir came much later and in 1999 Anthony Caro was taken to see the Choir by the Direction regionale des affaires culturelles du Nord-Pas-de-Calais (DRAC) and invited to create a chapel as a part of the restoration project. The restoration of the Choir has been a complicated procedure owing to factors such as the excavation of tombs beneath the original floor.

The Bishop wished that the Chapel be used as a baptistery and so a full immersion font cast in concrete will sit east of the choir surrounded by nine niches. Around the font the story of The Creation, with a particular emphasis on water, spans through two terracotta and wood sculptures on the north and south apse together with the sculptures made from steel and terracotta in the niches. On the north and south sides of the choir two French oak towers 'Melody' and 'Harmony' will climb high into the roof. Like the baptismal font two cast concrete benches will sit either side of the choir with tapestry cushions designed by Caro. In the Nave of the Church there will be various liturgical items; an altar, two lecterns, two candelabras, a crucifix, chair covers and a tabernacle. Between the Nave and the Choir the bricked up arches will be replaced by frosted glass screens to let the light through the Church and create a subtle divide between the spaces. On the South side of the Church there will be French Oak door that leads outside to a large external steel tower, which from the outside will welcome people into the chapel. The stained glass windows are not designed by Caro but will remain as they were a generous gift to the Church as a part of the restoration project. All of the different elements will be fabricated in the UK and France.

The press view of the Chapel of Light will be on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2008, the inauguration of the Church will take place on 11<sup>th</sup> October and the blessing by the Bishop on 12<sup>th</sup> October. In conjunction with this project there will be retrospective exhibitions in Calais, with a focus on terracotta works, Gravelines, with a focus on paper works and Dunkerque with a wide range of works, opening on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> October.



Original photo showing the caused by the plane crash in 1940



The Apse in 1999



1/10<sup>th</sup> Scale model of the renovated choir

1:10 Model of interior with view of Niches, Baptismal Font and North and South Towers



External View of 1:10 Model from the street showing Threshold Sculpture



1: 10 Model of Threshold Sculpture



1:10 Model Interior View of Door into the Choir

1:10 Model of the South Tower –The Tower of Speech



1:10 Model of the interior of chapel showing the North Tower – The Tower of Song



View of Apse showing the Baptismal Font



The Niches (work in progress)



Niche 1: The Deep



Niche 2: Sea Creatures



Niche 3: Galapagos



Niche 4: The Seashore



Niche 5: Watering Hole



Niche 6: Waterfall



Niche 7: In the Undergrowth



Niche 8: Beside the River



Niche 9: Fruits



1: 10 Working Model View of South Aisle - Alleluia



1: 10 Working Model of North Aisle – Paradise Garden

