



Still Water

Jessica Mitchell

In May 2018, a memorial to people affected by overseas terrorism was dedicated at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, UK, in a ceremony conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury and attended by the loved ones of those killed in terrorist incidents. The sculpture 'Still Water' was created by artist Alison Wilding RA in collaboration with sculptor and maker Andy Kershaw and was chosen by an independent Panel chaired by Baroness Lynda Chalker. 'Still Water' is set amidst new woodland and offers a place for quiet remembrance to people affected by any terrorist attack overseas including the World Trade Centre bombings, the Tunisian beach shootings and other events that have received less attention in the media.

The memorial sculpture is cast from concrete and has been designed and placed to evoke a hidden woodland pool. The inscription on the back of the memorial's seating simply reads: This memorial is for everyone who has



The surface of the ellipse contains seven cast concrete shapes which reference a mountainous terrain. According to Alison Wilding, some people have suggested these have a 'tomb-like aspect', but this was not the intention of the design. She suggests that the shapes also look rather like ships moving around on the water. © Angus Mill.



The memorial 'Still Water' is sited a short distance within a copse so that it gradually reveals itself, a bit like coming across a hidden pool within a woodland glade. The memorial itself is composed of a concrete ellipse set just below ground level so that its perimeter will become blurred and softened as nature takes its course. The ellipse is crisscrossed with brass lines that strengthen the base but which also echo the meridian lines crossing the globe and the path of aircraft as they fly through the sky. © Angus Mill.



Colour was added to the top layer of cement which was then hand-trowelled to create the effect of ruffling on the surface, as if the waters of a pool were being stirred by a gentle breeze. The way the pigments were coloured into the elliptical base was based on images of the moon that had been transcribed onto the base. Builders worked all through one of the coldest nights in November as this all had to be done in one go. © Angus Mill.



The memorial bears only this simple inscription. © Angus Mill.

been affected by terrorism overseas. According to Tobias Ellwood MP, who was asked by then Prime Minister David Cameron in 2015 to deliver the memorial, 'This memorial shows our recognition, as a nation, of the loss that has been suffered by British families over a number of years, and will stand for those events that, sadly, are likely in future years'.

The National Memorial Arboretum is home to many memorials, mainly dedicated to remembrance of the armed forces. In creating 'Still Water' artist Alison Wilding aimed to make a place that supported 'quiet reflection' and which was 'completely inclusive' in order to be relevant to the great diversity of experiences of people affected by overseas terrorism. The sculpture does not include a list of names or events being memorialised and the simple inscription is not typical of wording on memorials. Wilding worried that the

design might be open to criticism for this but she says 'I was very clear that I wanted this to be a place where anyone who thought they might have a connection with it could come so I wasn't going to exclude anyone'.

This inclusivity rings true for Belinda Green, whose husband Stephen was killed in an attack on an Algerian gas plant in 2013. She says 'Still Water represents the calm after a storm. For me it reflects how the trauma of the event for any person who suffers loss will eventually lessen but not be forgotten. I like the openness of this design very much, the ability to look out to the surroundings in any direction, and importantly that its openness will not exclude anyone'.

According to Baroness Lynda Chalker 'Whilst there is no dominating symbolism, the families that we shared the design with appreciated imagery that represented the global reach of terrorism, but also the continuation of life'. ■