

Brussels, November 1918. From War to Peace?

On 26 September, the exhibition 'Brussels, November 1918' will open in the BELvue Museum, an initiative of CegeSoma/State Archives.

The exhibition wants to evoke the last months of the war and the first months of peace in the city of Brussels.

In the past years, the occupation years were the core of the multiple commemorative events. Now it is time to focus on the transition from war to peace.

11 November 1918 marked the end of the Great War, but this date goes far beyond the symbolic importance of the Armistice. As the guns went silent, peace had not yet been achieved. Two days before the Armistice, the German Reich collapsed and the Republic was declared in an atmosphere of absolute chaos. On the battlefields, the soldiers had to learn to live in peace again. This transition was quite a traumatic experience. For more than four years, daily life at and behind the front had been dominated by the war.

As the nation's capital, Brussels is the incarnation of national power, even though the government remained in exile in Sainte-Adresse near Le Havre during the war, as well as of local power structures, though these lost much of their power during the occupation. But there are also the 700,000 inhabitants of Brussels who were subjected to the German occupation.

The exhibition Brussels, November 1918: from War to Peace? shows a quantity of photographs and historical documents, but also some exceptional archive footage. Interactive applications allow the visitors to discover songs that were popular at the end of the war. With touchscreen modules, the press at the time of the liberation can be consulted. Finally, the exhibition wants to focus on the day-to-day difficulties of the war refugees.

Brussels, November 1918: from War to Peace? focuses on the following themes:

- The final offensive
- Daily life
- The refugees
- The 'red days' (a revolt of German soldiers around 11 November)
- 22 November 1918
- Peace and hatred
- The post-war period

Curators: Chantal Kesteloot and Jens van de Maele

Interview with Chantal Kesteloot

Scientific committee : Bruno Benvindo/Emmanuel Debruyne/Dominiek Dendooven/Barbara Deruytter/Sophie de Schaepdrijver/Benoît Majerus/Gonzague Pluvinage/Peter Scholliers/Pierre-Alain Tallier/Laurence van Ypersele/Christian Vreugde/Antoon Vrints/Nico Wouters

Scenography and realisation : mimesis.architecten

Interview with the scenographers

The exhibition is free and can be visited at the BELvue Museum from 26 September 2018 to 6 January 2019.

Opening hours and information : <https://www.belvue.be/fr/activity/temporary-exhibition>