



PLATE 445 (ABOVE)

Bertrand Carrière, Canadian, born 1957
**Cimetière Allemand [German Cemetery],
Vermandovillers, Somme, Picardie,
France, 2006**

From the series *Lieux Mêmes*
Inkjet print, ed. #3/10, printed 2010
20 x 25 inches (50.8 x 63.5 cm)
The MFAH, museum purchase with
funds provided by Photo Forum 2010
2011.269

Canadian photographer Bertrand Carrière performed another type of memorializing gesture when he traveled to the battlefields of WWI's western front, from the Somme in France to the Flanders in Belgium. He sets his route based on an album of personal photographs belonging to a soldier with the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Ninety years after the war, Carrière rediscovered the sites visited by the album's maker and quickly realised that « it is difficult not to see the conspicuous signs left by war »¹⁴. By photographing memorials and cemeteries, like the one seen in Cimetière allemand (german cemetery), Vermandovillers, Somme, Picardie, 2006 [plate 445], Carrière aimed to produce « images capable eliciting a voiceless memory inscribed in the soil »¹⁵. The Battle of the Somme is considered one of the bloodiest military operations ever recorded. What was meant to be a decisive breakthrough for the Allies resulted in the slaughter on both sides and marked a decisive shift in the war on the western front. Initially, Allied forces bombarded German lines with artillery, unaware of the extent of the intricate and fortified trenches on the German side. When Allied soldiers proceeded on foot toward enemy lines, they unexpectedly met the firepower of German machine guns. From July to November 1916, the two sides fought at a stalemate. By the time the battle ended in November, the British had suffered about 420,000 casualties, the French about 195,000, and the German about 650,000¹⁶. Through his methodology and subject matter, Carrière has crafted a hybridized memorial. His photograph not only documents a venerated site but also offers a commemorative gesture.

Nathalie Zelt

War / Photography *images of armed conflict and its aftermath*

Part VI Memorials

p. 504

¹⁴ Bertrand, *Lieux Mêmes* (Québec City : L'instant même, 2012), 100

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ The BBC, «History : Battle of the Somme : 1 July-13 November, 1916
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/battle-somme.shtml>.