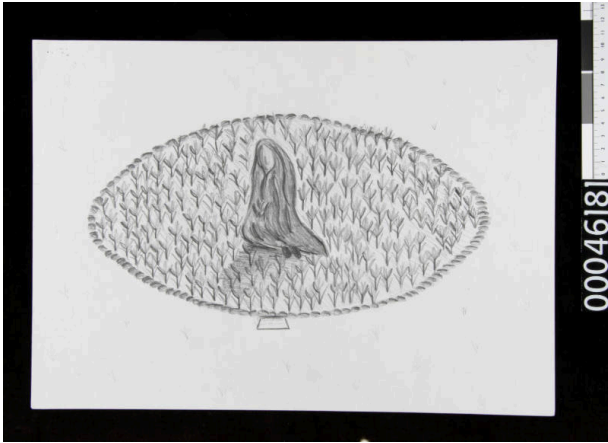


Basic Detail Report



00046181

Title

Concept design for the SIEV X National Memorial in Canberra, by Maggie McDade

Date

2004

Medium

Pencil on paper

Dimensions

Overall: 95 x 420 mm

Name

Drawing

History

SIEV X (Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel Unknown) is the name given to a decrepit, overcrowded fishing boat that embarked from the port of Bandar Lampung in Sumatra, Indonesia, on 18 October 2001. It carried more than 400 asylum seekers who had fled Iraq and Afghanistan. After a night sailing in horrendous weather the boat foundered en route to the offshore Australian territory of Christmas Island, drowning 353 people - 146 children, 142 women and 65 men. More than 100 people survived the initial sinking and floated helplessly for 20 hours 'like birds on the water' in the words of one survivor. During the night, according to those in the water, two large vessels arrived and shone searchlights, but failed to rescue the survivors. The identity of these vessels has never been established. The following day only 44 asylum seekers remained alive. They were eventually picked up by passing fishermen. A 45th survivor was rescued some 12 hours later. In 2003 well-known Tasmanian psychologist and author Steve Biddulph established the SIEV X National Memorial Project to raise awareness of this event amongst young Australians. High schools throughout Australia were sent information on the SIEV X incident and asked to develop designs for a memorial to be erected on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra. Art teachers facilitated the project and students, generally working in groups, submitted drawings, paintings or models of their proposed memorial, as well as short rationales outlining its message and symbolism. Facilitators also filmed students discussing their response to the event and the impetus behind their designs. More than 140 schools participated in the project and in 2004 an exhibition of their designs was installed at the Pitt Street Uniting Church in Sydney and the Wesley Church in Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. In 2006 a selection of concept drawings was donated to the Australian National Maritime Museum, including the winning design by Brisbane student Mitchell Donaldson. Mitchell's proposal consisted of a series of painted poles (one for each victim of the disaster) incorporating the shape of a boat and running down into the lake. The white poles are of different heights to represent adults and children. Community groups,

churches and schools from across Australia were invited to submit a decorated wooden pole as part of the memorial. The memorial was to have been assembled temporarily in Canberra for three weeks in October 2006; however mishandling of the planning application by the National Capital Authority led to permission not being granted in time. Nevertheless on 15 October 2006, the day of the anniversary event, hundreds of people arrived at the lakeside site to raise the decorated poles in a ceremony opened by the Australian Capital Territory's Chief Minister Jon Stanhope. In 2007, the sixth anniversary of the tragedy, the ACT Government allowed the memorial to be erected for six weeks in Weston Park, Yarralumla. Project coordinators now have a three year permit for the memorial, with hope it will become a 20 year permit.