

# Exhibition commemorating WW I centenary opens today

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**L**AST year, performance artist Priyanka Chaudhary visited the small town of Ypres in Belgium. It was at the centre of the bloodiest warfare between the Central and Allied Forces during the World War I. Chaudhary walked from one cemetery to the next with a charkha. Placing herself on one of the memorial steps, she started spinning the wheel. This performance was part of her efforts to commemorate the WWI's centenary year.

Video of this performance along with her work in mixed me-

dia that document the aftermath of WWI feature in Gallery Maskara's latest exhibition titled '1914-2014'. This is the first of the four curated shows by gallerist Abhay Maskara, commemorating the centenary of WWI. "The second show of the series will be held at the India Art Fair, Delhi, later this month. The gallery will host the third show in mid-2014 and the final one will be in Belgium later this year," says Maskara. The exhibition that opens on Thursday will be on till February 28.

Doing a show marking the centenary year of the war was on Maskara's mind for a while. "These hundred years are a significant time in world history, when



Artist Priyanka Chaudhary at the war memorial in Belgium.

the global socio-political boundaries were redrawn. The war and its lasting effects — immediate and eventual — made a dent in

history that has lasted a century," the gallerist says. Maskara approached the artist last year.

While Chaudhary was walk-

ing through the town of Ypres, someone reminded her that 2014 would be the centenary year for WWI. The Delhi-based artist then decided to begin a series of work surrounding the war and its aftermath. For this, she used the charkha extensively. "It stands for the Mahatma, non-violence and silent resistance. I spin continuously at war-torn places, trying to bring peace and meditation to these spaces," she says.

Chaudhary talks about violence and conflict in other regions as well. For the show, she visited the conflict zones of Tlatelolco in Mexico, Jallianwala Bagh in India, Ground Zero in New York and Soweto in South Africa to

document violence through mixed media, photographs, installations and videos.

The three following exhibitions will include a larger narrative surrounding the war — its effect on world history and the art world. But to acknowledge the century that has passed is crucial, Maskara says. "In the centenary year, we wish to reopen a discussion about the war. This is like creating a movement, stirring something so that one tends to notice. Otherwise the countless memorials across the world with the names engraved on them will just lie forgotten," says Chaudhary.

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