



PRESS RELEASE

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Gravestone trends at Stone+tec 2018: Individualised memorials and grave decorations

Changes in funeral culture are bringing profound changes to stonemasonry. Stonemasons will learn how businesses can deal with these new trends at Stone+tec 2018, which will take place in Nuremberg from 13 to 16 June. Gravestone and grave decoration manufacturers will showcase innovative solutions for craftspeople and industrial processors there. Two days of the fair will feature series of in-depth lectures with the BIV's Forum Cemetery and the Cemetery Culture Congress. "Only Stone+tec offers such a wide range of products and knowledge on all aspects of gravestones and cemeteries," emphasises Beate Fischer, Exhibition Director for Stone+tec at NürnbergMesse. The changes in funeral culture are offering opportunities especially for demanding craftspeople and designers: Studies confirm the importance, both today and in the future, of an individually designed grave for coping with bereavement.

Innovative stonemasons are critically important to the traditions of mourning and funerals, according to president Gustav Treulieb from the Association of German Stonemasons (BIV). Treulieb is observing two extremes: On the one hand, graves should be cheap and not require maintenance; on the other hand, sophisticated, authentic and individualised tombs are sought after. Well-designed gravestones do not necessarily have to be expensive. According to Mr Treulieb, responsible stonemasons have the skills and the responsibility to find answers to deal with this challenging culture of remembrance. "That is a craft, and we have to go back to the high standards of our roots," notes Gustav Treulieb.

At Stone+tec 2018, the BIV is organising the **Forum Cemetery** with lectures and presentations on this issue on Thursday 14 June.

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Making a lasting mark

The deputy director of the Study Group for Cemetery and Memorials (AFD) and of the Museum for Sepulchral Culture, Gerold Eppler, feels that changes within funeral culture also have positive sides because they are forcing stonemasons to think about the meaningfulness of their products: “Good designers have fewer problems with the changes in the culture of remembrance. They know what they have to do and how and why.” Authenticity is a key factor in design. The material must be processed in such a way that natural stone looks like natural stone, Eppler points out. Moreover, a grave memorial should display the decedent’s personality traits. Of course, natural stone is still most popular with customers: The durability of this material guarantees that the place where the decedent is resting can be clearly marked. Therefore, natural stone will continue to symbolise the wish to preserve the memory of a loved one in future, too, Eppler says with confidence.

The **Cemetery Culture Congress**, which will take place at Stone+tec in Exhibition Centre Nuremberg on 15 June 2018, will also tackle changes in cemetery culture.

Creating ‘functioning graves’

Günter Czasny is also working on the role of tombs for dealing with bereavement. According to the deputy managing director of the bronze foundry Strassacker, studies prove that public perception and acceptance of graves and cemeteries are low, but they play an important role for most people going through a mourning process. Czasny feels that the biggest challenge lies in giving the grave an actual use. Czasny recommends that stonemasons delve into what makes a grave powerful and ‘functioning’ and what role a well-designed grave sign can play in this process. Czasny notes that “individuality”, “grieving processes” and “rites and rituals” will become increasingly important in future.

Trend towards smaller graves

Even though highly personal factors influence grave design, the trend is moving towards smaller graves, says Karin Plein, managing director of the bronze foundry Plein: “This creates a challenge for stonemasons and for us too because it is becoming increasingly difficult to create an individualised grave that also meets aesthetic standards.” Plein’s grave accessories therefore have a very simple design with clear lines and shapes. These no-frill contours also mirror the material’s patina, Plein says. At Stone+tec 2018, Plein will showcase new motifs, scripts and stainless-steel lanterns and a wide range of figurines that can be combined with small stones.



Regional stone on the rise

President Gustav Treulieb also sees a trend towards deliberate selection of materials by customers. Relatives look for a connection to the stone used in a grave, whether to recall a holiday, stress their roots in the region or emphasise sustainability. The market for regional materials in grave design is growing, albeit slowly. The special show “Our natural stone” at Stone+tec encourages greater cooperation between regional quarries and craftspeople.

Personal interaction in Nuremberg

In addition to product information, Stone+tec also offers opportunities for in-person exchanges of knowledge and inspiration. At Stone+tec, ideas grow, new ideas blossom and networks are maintained. “All of these are things that we do not have enough time for in everyday life. Stone+tec is a place for inspiration and creativity,” stresses president Treulieb.

For more news about Stone+tec 2018, visit: www.stone-tec.com/en/news

About Stone+tec

Stone+tec, the international trade fair for natural stone and stone processing, is organised by NürnbergMesse with honorary sponsorship from the DNV (German Natural Stone Association) and BIV (Association of German Stonemasons). It also receives international support from Confindustria Marmomacchine, the Italian Association for Natural Stone Working Machinery and Equipment. With over 15,000 trade visitors in 2015, Stone+tec is the most important gathering for the natural stone industry in the German-speaking regions.

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