



Kris Dewitte exhibition, p.10

MAY 14 2008

| N°29

| INDEPENDENT NEWSWEEKLY

| WWW.FLANDERTODAY.EU

Erkenningsnummer P708816



Secrets of Flemish Art go on show in Brussels

The painting "Boy at a Window" is one of 51 works of Flemish art being shown in Brussels at the Museum of Fine Arts. No one knows the identity of the boy or the name of the artist who painted him. He stands at a window, tapping on the glass pane as if trying to attract our attention. The painting comes from the collection of the British royal family and forms part of a fascinating exhibition on Flemish masters opening on 16 May. Read the full story on page 8.

Small is beautiful

The future is big for an institute that specialises in miniature technology

Saffina Rana

Nestled amongst the trees of Leuven's Heverlee campus, the Interuniversity Micro-Electronics Centre (IMEC) is one of the world's leading independent research centres in nanotechnology and also Europe's largest. Its aim is to develop high-tech devices that are three to 10 years ahead of what is currently in use, a process that involves scientific know-how and a powerful imagination.

Take brain scanning, a common procedure in large hospitals to diagnose brain disorders such as epilepsy or to detect possible cancers, inflammation or haemorrhaging in the brain. The scan, known as an electroencephalogram (EEG), can be a daunting experience.

A series of large sensors are pasted onto your head or inserted up your nose, with a tangle of wires connecting them to a nearby computer. This reads and records the patterns of electrical activity in the brain. You have to lie still for an hour while the testing takes place, and although this

is not painful, it can be a stressful experience, particularly for children. If nose sensors are used, there can also be residual bleeding for a day or two after the test.

Six years ago, when the people at IMEC talked to the medical profession about what developments it would like to see, a more patient-friendly EEG was high on the list. Within a few months, the IMEC team had constructed a prototype wireless EEG: a headset containing sensors connected to quite a large portable box which would amplify and transmit the brain signals to a laptop.

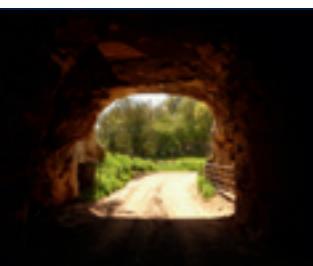
"It was not a solution, but it showed where the problems were – power and volume," explains Chris Van Hoof, director of IMEC's "systems in a package" programme, and also a professor at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. Power and volume are the biggest challenges in making any system smaller and autonomous. "You want it to be battery-powered or completely autonomous," he continues, "so the power

Continued on page 3



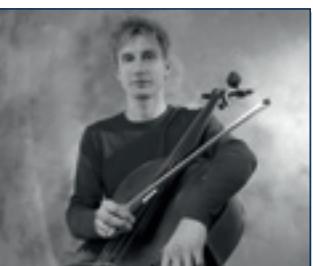
News

Antwerp artist Paul Ibour has created two sculptures for the new Olympic Park in Beijing. The works will be seen by some 70 million visitors to the Summer Games.



Active

The Mergel Caves in outer Limburg province have boosted the economy, preserved history and taken lives. The underground warrens are open to tourists; Monique Philips tells you what to expect.



Interview

Anthony Gröger is a cellist with one of the most successful string quartets in Flanders. He talks to Alan Hope about teaching music to children and the recording business.

De Lijn complaints-service "worst in Flanders"

Ombudsman slams public transport authority

Alan Hope

The complaints-handling procedure at Flemish public transport authority De Lijn is the worst out of all Flemish authorities, according to the region's Ombudsman in a report to the infrastructure committee of the Flemish Parliament last week.

Ombudsman *ad interim* Johan Nootens was speaking to MPs following publication of his annual report, which revealed that De Lijn was the subject of more than three times as many complaints in 2007 as all other government services put together.

A total of 26,672 complaints were

received by first-line services representing Flemish government bodies. Of that total, 21,323 were complaints about De Lijn services. The second highest complaint ranking was the housing service, but it only received a relatively modest 1,316 complaints.

De Lijn reacted with "amazement" to the ombudsman's evaluation. According to director-general Ingrid Lieten, the service is the same as it was last year when Nootens' predecessor praised them for their work. De Lijn allocates 16 full-time staff to

Continued on page 5

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Wonen in Brussel

The Flemish Community Commission, VGC, has been trying for many years to encourage Flemish people to settle in Brussels. It is, after all, a city with Dutch-speaking roots, surrounded on all sides by Flanders Region. But Flemish families prefer to live in the leafy suburbs and endure the daily commute into the capital.

Guy Vanhengel wants to change all that. As chairman of the board of VGC, he has launched a programme to sell the city to young Flemish singles and families. One of the projects has been to draw up a detailed description of the different neighbourhoods of Brussels so that people can refine their search for the ideal apartment or house.

This resulted in a list of 99 different neighbourhoods that reflect the diversity of the urban fabric. To give more substance to the quarters, six photographers were assigned to capture the character of the areas and the people who live there.

The results can be seen in the just-published book *Brussel, Bruxelles, Brussels*. Photographs capture the ordinary unpretentious atmosphere of Brussels going about its business. You see a traffic roundabout from above, ladies chatting in the Marollen, children walking along a street,

holding onto a rope to avoid straying into the traffic.

It's all rather understated, perhaps even a little dull. You get the impression that Brussels is a city that is still looking for its identity. Or maybe it is a matter of being a city of too many identities. Does it make you want to live there? I'm not sure. It often looks a sad place, its colours muted under a heavy cloud.

But, then again, it is also a welcoming place, where more than half the population comes from abroad. The photographs show the different communities living almost the same lives as they would in their home countries. Brussels doesn't force anyone to change their ways, not in the least.

Yet the feeling remains that Brussels needs...something. I have no idea what, but possibly it is something that young Flemish families would bring if they could ever be persuaded to settle in one of 99 urban neighbourhoods.

Derek Blyth

Brussel, Bruxelles, Brussels, €39,95
in Brussels bookshops and at the
VGC, Lombardstraat 41, Brussels

Online

www.vgc.be/fotoboek



FACE OF FLANDERS



Peter Engels

Peter Engels is used to creating large-scale paintings – but never quite so large as the image that hung over New York's Times Square earlier this month. Reuters news agency was so taken with the photo of the Flemish painter in front of his new portrait of Nelson Mandela, they projected it on the billboard attached to their Manhattan headquarters – the largest digital display system in the world.

The 687-square-metre image over New York's busiest district reaches 1.5 million people per day and might help Engels sell the portrait, which he painted in celebration of Mandela's 90th birthday next month. He hopes to employ an auction house to get top dollar, and he will donate half the proceeds to 46664, the name of the Aids charity Mandela founded. "Whoever buys it, not only get a unique painting but also gives to charity," says Engels.

The painter, like his father before him, used to work in landscapes. He and Marcel Engels organised exhibitions together until Marcel passed away. Then Engels switched to large portraits, all 1 x 2 metres. He takes commissions, but he's also busy with portraits of well-known people. Livening up his studio in Brasschaat are Luciano Pavarotti, Elvis Presley, Julia Roberts and Belgium's own Toots Thielemans, among the collection of about 20.

Engels has had the pleasure of meeting Thielemans several times but, of course, has never met most of his other subjects. "I choose people who I respect or like a lot and whose faces have a lot of character," he explains. Nelson Mandela, for instance, "has a warm smile and a glowing charisma." Though it's not impossible to acquire one, Engels actually wants to hang on to his celebrity portraits, hoping to eventually show them all together in a gallery or museum.

His use of a pallet knife and sepia tones lends a sense of vintage to all the portraits, which he in fact sees as a bit of rebellion against Belgium's preoccupation with abstraction and modern styles. "I think that there has to be a certain know-how, a knowledge of technique, and I miss that in abstract art," he says. "Contemporary art is fast and hides a lack of skill. An architect needs to know every technical detail of a building, a car maker of a car, and a doctor of the human body. If they have to have specific technical skills, why not artists?"

Engels in fact teaches art classes, both portrait and landscapes. "We make one painting. It's not fast, but it's not abstract."

Lisa Bradshaw

Online

www.peterengels.eu

TALKING DUTCH

notes on language



muziek

We've all got the music in us, that abstract language through which people can make themselves understood without having to revert to a spoken language. For this reason, the new Swiss conductor of the Vlaams Radio Orkest, Michel Tabachnik, believes that an orchestra should present itself as languageless. The VRO, which, outside Belgium, will also be known as the Brussels Philharmonic from September, has built up a formidable reputation, especially in Paris, where it has been invited to give four concerts a year.

We've all surely picked up a pencil or a fork to conduct Radetsky's *March* on New Year's Day and even thought that the job of a conductor can't be so difficult. In front of you, 70-odd professionals who know the music inside out, and all you have to do is put on a show waving our baton and rolling your eyes with emotion during the quiet bits. A flowing mane and coat-tails completes the image.

And then there are the benefits: centre of attention, all that applause, adoring looks from the harpist. You live to a grand old age, no doubt helped by the health-giving effects of the wall of sound your body absorbs.

Yet, apparently, conductors do much more to earn their crust. Tabachnik explained in a recent article that his job is to make sure that the orchestra has a uniform sound. *Dat vraagt van een dirigent een perfecte kennis van alle instrumenten zonder die te kunnen bespelen*: that requires the conductor to have a perfect knowledge of all the instruments without (necessarily) being able to play them. To achieve the results he desires, he has to tell the oboist where to breathe and the violinist how to up-bow and down-bow: *ik moet zeggen aan de hoboïst waar hij moet ademen en aan de violist hoe hij moet duwen en trekken*. And the orchestra expects the conductor to have *een erg precies idee over het muziekstuk*. Finally, he must have the charisma to impose all of this.

Tabachnik is a great believer in mixing music from different periods. He's happy to include Beethoven and Xenakis on the same programme, even though they're separated by 200 years: *niet hun taal verschilt, wel wat ze uitdrukt* – it's not the language that's different but what it expresses.

For his first concert, Tabachnik goes for a safer combination: you can see him in action on 16 May in the Paleis voor Schone Kunsten (Bozar) conducting a programme of Debussy and Ravel, titled *La Douce France*. The concert is repeated the next evening in Ghent at De Bijloke.

As you listen, remember that *in muziek er is geen theorie. Je hoeft alleen maar te luisteren. Fantasie is de wet*. In other words there's no theory in music: all you have to do is listen. Imagination is the rule. Which is a translation of the Dutch, which was no doubt translated from the French. So, enough words: let the music speak.

Alistair MacLean

online

www.vlaamsradioorkest.be

Flanders Today

independent newsweekly

Editor: Derek Blyth
Deputy editor: Lisa Bradshaw
News editor: Alan Hope
Science editor: Saffina Rana
Agenda: Sarah Crew
Picture research: Esther Bourée
Prepress: Nancy Temmerman
Contributors: Marie Dumont, Stéphanie Duval, An Gyde, Alistair MacLean, Katharine Mill,

Monique Philips, Leander Schaerlaeckens, Steven Tate, Denzil Walton, Rory Watson
Project manager: Pascale Zoetaert
Publisher: VUM
NV Vlaamse Uitgeversmaatschappij
Gossetlaan 28 – 1702 Groot-Bijgaarden
Editorial address: Waterloosesteenweg 1038
1180 Brussels
Tel.: 02.373.99.09 – Fax: 02.375.98.22

E-mail: editorial@flanderstoday.eu
Subscriptions
France Lycops
Tel: 02.373.83.59
E-mail: subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu
Advertising: Evelyne Fregonese
Tel. 02.373.83.57
E-mail: advertising@flanderstoday.eu
Verantwoordelijke uitgever: Derek Blyth



FEATURE

How small has become big

Munaghati Ramamurthy/Materials Research Society



Getting down to basics: image of a polymer created at the Center for Nanoscale Materials in Illinois

Continued from page 1

consumption has to go down by three orders of magnitude. And you want it to be unobtrusive, so of course the size has to go down for comfort. Our goal was to put everything within a cubic centimetre or less."

The team did this by looking at

alternative power generation. "We started research on thermal and vibrational power generation – getting energy from the ambient [environment], either from the person or from radio frequencies that might be available," says Van Hoof. This work has resulted in very low power circuits, the size of a centimetre square. "They are

the lowest power amplifiers ever made," he proudly adds.

IMEC has come up with several versions of the portable brain scanners, from the battery-operated to a chip that can be worn by the patient or implanted under his or her skin. In parallel, the team has developed headband and cap devices containing ultra-small

sensors to detect brain activity. These contain built-in tests to ensure the sensors are working. "You still need a bathing cap-style device with electrodes, but the system is a lot more comfortable than what is available," says Van Hoof. "Six years ago, there were no solutions at all to make the scans portable."

A dozen potential users are currently testing the devices in a range of applications. These include research partners, the University of Leuven psychology department, the medical department at the Leuven university hospital and companies involved in developing healthcare, fitness and virtual gaming applications where you can control a virtual environment by thought.

The team expects it to become commercial in the next two to three years. Van Hoof has already been getting some feedback. "The system works well with sleep monitoring tests in a clinical hospital environment," he says.

IMEC's president and chief executive officer Gilbert Declerck is enthusiastic about his researchers. "We are a brain magnet," he says. The centre has not only been successful in attracting the world's best scientists but also finance from international companies. Started in 1984 with €62 million of seed money from the Flemish government, IMEC brought in a revenue of €240 million last year. Of this, only €40 million came from the Flemish government. The remaining €200 million was exter-

nally generated predominantly by assisting international companies such as Intel, Panasonic and Zeiss in developing the next generation of their technology and products. This year's total revenue is estimated at around the €250 million mark. The centre is run as a public-private partnership, and IMEC's research programmes are defined with an ear to industry. Large companies then contribute some 10-20% of the cost of the programmes to join in.

The average age of researchers is 35, and they can be seen wandering around the corridors and surrounding woodlands clad in jeans, brightly coloured hoodies and trainers. They're an international crowd, and setting English as the working language has helped to attract them. Around 1,000 are Belgian and the rest come from France and the Netherlands, as well as further afield – India, Japan, the USA, China and Korea.

Professor Declerck isn't ruffled by the prospect of a "brain drain" – his scientists being tempted away to other companies or countries offering better incentives. "Young scientists want to join champions," he says. "We are experts in the field. We keep them by paying them a decent salary, offering high-level facilities and a good environment."

"The best people tend to be absorbed by semiconductor companies. The success of IMEC also lies in the fact that in this country there are no big semiconductor companies," he adds with a smile.

What is nanotechnology?

Machines smaller than the width of half a human hair? It was once the stuff of science fiction, but now it's becoming nanotechnology. "Nano" comes from the Greek word meaning "dwarf" and, put simply, nanotechnology can be defined as engineering on a very small scale. To give you an idea of how small – a nanometre is one billionth of a metre, about one hundred thousandth of the width of a hair or the length of around 10 hydrogen atoms.

Scientists have been manipulating matter on a nano scale for centuries without being able to see it. It wasn't until the development of a new generation of microscopes in the 1980s that the interactions of atoms and molecules at this level could really be visualised, analysed or controlled. The breakthrough came in 1981 with the invention of the Scanning Tunneling Microscope at IBM laboratories in Switzerland. This allowed scientists to record shape by tactile sensing, much like reading braille on a miniature scale. It has led to scientists being able to manipulate individual atoms and molecules to make new materials and build complex structures such as computer chips thousands of times smaller than existing technologies allowed.

Researchers found that when they manipulated particles at this nano-scale they could give materials completely new properties. Metals can become semiconductors or insulators. Some substances fluoresce in all the colours of the rainbow, while others convert light into electricity. Harnessing these atomic changes could lead to smaller, cheaper, lighter and faster devices using less materials and

consuming less power. For instance, it could benefit everyday products which rely on battery operation since the production of an average battery uses up to 30 times more energy than it can ever deliver in power.

Although nanotechnology is still confined to the lab in this and many other areas, it has been successfully used to



develop new materials. Manipulating calcium and phosphate particles makes synthetic bone for use in repairing damages caused by injuries. Sunscreens are using nanoparticles that are effective in absorbing ultra-violet light, and car manufacturers have been using nanocomposite materials in bumper designs, making them around 60% lighter and twice as resistant to denting and scratching. It is also

being used to create retinal, ear and hip implants so that they aren't rejected by the body.

The potential of nanotechnology to offer solutions to environmental and societal problems has commanded a worldwide rise in research spending over the last decade, from millions to billions of euros. The EU is currently spending €3.5 billion of the public pot on funding nanotechnology research to 2013. According to experts at Lux Research, as well as America's National Science Foundation, the annual global production of products incorporating nanotechnology will be worth over one trillion euros in the next 10 years.

However, fiddling with the basic atomic structure of things raises the same questions as genetic engineering and biotechnology. There are concerns over the possible long-term effects of microscopic particles in the body, and the pace of new developments means that ethical and risk issues may not be adequately covered in existing regulations or standards. The ETC Group, an international organisation that monitors advances in technology and works for sustainable advancement, argues that because nanotechnology can be applied to any industrial sector, no one regulatory body is taking a lead, and research into new products is continuing beneath the radar screen of public debate.

online

www.imec.be



How may we help you?

FORTIS 

Putting your skills at the service of a multinational often means moving to a country you know little about. As a leading Belgian bank, Fortis has therefore developed the Welcome Offer Expat.

The Welcome Offer Expat

The Welcome Offer Expat brings together all the services expatriates need thus avoiding any unwelcome surprises when they first arrive. For example, you can open a Fortis account from your home country. Fortis can also assist with your initial expenses when you first arrive in Belgium. Moreover you are given your bank card already the first time you visit your Fortis branch.

The Expat Service Line

Anyone coming to live in a foreign country will be faced with certain practical and administrative problems. Fortis therefore makes an Expat Service Line available to expatriates and their families which they can call for

information on a wide variety of issues: problems of everyday life (e.g. where to find a plumber who speaks English), contracts, legal issues, social security, etc. And it doesn't cost you a cent!

Phone and PC banking in English

As a modern bank with its sights firmly fixed on the future, Fortis offers its customers the tools they need to undertake transactions whenever they want from wherever they are, be it over the telephone (Phone banking) or on a PC (PC banking). These tools are available in English.

Fortis Expat Competence Centre

To find out more about the services that Fortis offers to expats, call the Fortis Expat Competence Centre at + 32 (0)2 433 41 00 (Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.), send an e-mail to expat@fortis.com or surf to www.fortisbanking.be/expatinbelgium

Public transport complaints procedure "worst in Flanders"

Continued from page 1

receiving and handling questions and complaints. Last year, Lieten said, 80% of complaints were handled within the 45-day deadline laid down. Since the beginning of the year, the service has been streamlined, and now achieves a clear-up rate of 93%, she said.

Nootens pointed out that the fault does not lie with the first-line complaints service, which he said "works well". The problem comes when aggrieved passengers bring their problems to the ombudsman because the complaint has not been handled. Those customers complain that De Lijn ignores them: "Sometimes De Lijn leaves mails unanswered for a year," he told MPs. Typical complaints include wheelchair users deprived of access, parents complaining about fines levied on schoolchildren,

rude drivers who refuse to stop, and season-ticket holders fined as fare-dodgers when they forget their tickets. According to Nootens, not only are fines for "forgetfulness" far too high, but De Lijn is too quick to call in the bailiffs for delays in payment.

De Lijn responded that season-ticket holders now have two chances to forget their tickets before being fined; every effort is made to contact the parents of schoolchildren over fines; and a new protocol has been drawn up since the end of 2007 to tackle the question of fines and bailiffs.

High fines in themselves, meanwhile, were defended by mobility minister Kathleen Van Brempt. "These fit into our security plan, and need to be high enough to be dissuasive," she said. The minister has now invited both De Lijn and the ombudsman to meet for talks in an effort to improve communications.

Flemish author wins Independent fiction prize

Paul Verhaeghen, the Koksijde-born scientist and novelist now living in the United States, has won this year's Independent Prize for foreign fiction, for his 2004 novel *Omega Minor*. Verhaeghen, who now teaches in Atlanta Georgia, translated the novel himself, which means he will take all of the £10,000 prize money, typically shared between author and translator.

The Independent Prize is awarded every year to a work translated into English. It has been running since 1990, when the winner was the Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk, who would later win the Nobel Prize.

Verhaeghen's novel, a dystopia set in the Berlin of the Third Reich and the 1990s, was described by the jury as "probably one of the most ambitious novels about the past century". Verhaeghen said he would donate the prize money to the American Civil Liberties Union in protest at the "proto-fascistic tendencies" of the Bush administration.



Post-Points leave customers cold



Customers are not familiar with the services offered by new Post-Points, the Post Office last week admitted, launching an awareness-raising campaign which started with Post boss Johnny Thys and minister Inge Vervotte visiting a newspaper-shop equipped with one of the points. Post-Points are intended to take the place of fully-fledged post offices in places where those are no longer sustainable. They can be installed in other shops, supermarkets etc, and offer a limited range of postal services.

But customers seem to be unaware of what can be done at a Post-Point, including sending packages and recorded-delivery mail, Vervotte said. And she also launched a new service which will allow customers of the Post Bank to deposit transfer orders for sums over €300. By the end of the summer the Post Office intends to have most points equipped with the so-called "blue box".

NEWS FLASH



Shutterstock

Future civil servants could be drawn from the pool of people without a diploma, and should include more immigrants, according to Selor, the government agency concerned with staffing. The civil service, like many sectors, faces a shortage of staff as increasing numbers reach retirement age and are not replaced by the younger generation. About 40% of today's civil servants will retire over the next five years. Selor now intends to find ways to increase the pool of talent from which they can draw, by for example removing the "fetish of the diploma" in some cases, and by employing more candidates from immigrant origins across the board.

The office of foreigners' affairs has denied that violence was used to try to expatriate a Cameroon man who later committed suicide in an asylum-seekers' centre in Merkplas last week. The man arrived here three years ago and had his final appeal rejected last week. He was taken to the airport to be put aboard a flight, but resisted. The attempt was abandoned, but witnesses have alleged police used excessive force to restrain the man.

Belgium's richest man, Patokh Chodiev, is facing charges of money-laundering, setting up a company to further criminal plans, and forgery – offences which could carry a sentence of five years. Chodiev is one of six men against whom charges are sought by the prosecutor's office. The case against the man dates back ten years to "Kazakhgate" which involved contracting company Tractebel in an affair of "Consultancy commissions" – in effect, kickbacks – surrounding an installation in Kazakhstan.

Shopkeepers are increasingly having recourse to **security cameras** in an attempt to combat shoplifting, the organisation for the self-employed, Unizo, said last week. About half of all shops in Flanders have bought equipment recently. "Many of them have the feeling there's nothing else they can do, as they continue to suffer from shoplifters," a Unizo spokesman said. The average investment is between €1,200 and €5,000.

The airbase at Kleine-Brogel in Limburg was last week the **warmest spot in Europe**, with a recorded temperature of 26.5°C. The generalised heatwave of last week was particularly felt there, experts said, because of the special ground in the Kempen area, a mix of clay and sand which warms quickly and heats the surroundings from below. In addition, in other parts of the country the sea at this time of year has a major cooling effect.



Get Flanders Today in your letterbox each week

Want to keep in touch with Flanders?

Simply fill in the subscription form below and send it to:

Flanders Today

Subscription Department

Waterloosesteenweg 1038 – 1180 Brussels – Belgium

Fax: 00.32.2.375.98.22

Email: subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu

The newspaper version will be mailed to subscribers living in Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany and France. Residents of other countries will receive a weekly ezine.

Name:

Street:

City:

Postcode:

Country:

e-mail:

Privacy policy: We fully respect Belgian legislation on the protection of personal information. The data we collect will only be used for distribution of publications and will not be disclosed to any third parties without express consent.

Football star killed in road smash



François Sterchele, the 26-year-old star of Club Brugge and the national team, was killed in a road accident in Vresene near Beveren. According to initial reports, he left the road in his Porsche, struck a tree and was killed instantly. No other vehicles were involved. Sterchele came from Germinal Beerschot and Charleroi to Brugge this season. He was selected for the Red Devils six times, and took the field on four occasions. Last week the website of the club was fronted by a simple black page, while flags flew at half mast at the grounds of Club and local rival Cercle Brugge. Flemish sports minister Bert Anciaux said, "François was a natural talent, a real prize for any of the clubs he played for. He was the public's darling, wherever he played."

NEWS FLASH



The town of Blankenberge is to install slides from the dunes to the beach below, the city council has announced. Children frequently use the areas beside staircases as slides, a spokesman said, which can lead to erosion and damage. The first slide should be in place this summer.

Flanders is facing a serious shortage of teachers by 2010 as the existing profession gets older and new entrants fail to keep numbers up, according to a forecast by the education and training ministry. Primary schools will manage to keep up, but pre-school teacher numbers will be 500-600 short of requirements, with secondary schools looking at a shortfall of about 300 teachers. Thanks to an increasing number of teachers retiring, the number of job vacancies in the secondary sector will next year top 8,000.

The former imam of the main mosque in Ghent, Muhsin Paksoy, has been given a six-month suspended sentence by a court in the city. Paksoy was accused of culpable negligence after he was called by a woman who alleged her husband tortured her. But the imam did nothing. The man later went on to kill his wife and three other people. Paksoy fled to Turkey when charges were brought. He was tried in his absence.

Baby Donna, a child born of a surrogate mother who then sold her to a Dutch couple despite having promised her to the biological father and his wife, will be staying in the Netherlands, a Dutch court decided last week. Donna, who was three in March, has been the subject of court-cases since her birth. The court decided that regardless of the rights of the adult parties involved, it would not be in the interests of the child to remove her from the place she now considers home. The surrogate mother still faces criminal charges.

Police in Overpelt in Limburg are seeking thieves who stole a 400 kg stone elephant from the car-park of a tile business in the town at some time between 30 April and 5 May.

Belgium's oldest free radio station, Radio Scorpio in Leuven, last weekend started a fund-raising campaign to clear off debts amounting to €15,000 and keep the station going. Scorpio is the last radio station to broadcast without advertising, surviving on the goodwill of donors alone. The fund-raising involved parties and concerts featuring local bands Zweedse Scraps and Tape, as well as an online auction of comic strips donated by Bart Schoofs and Kim Duchateau.

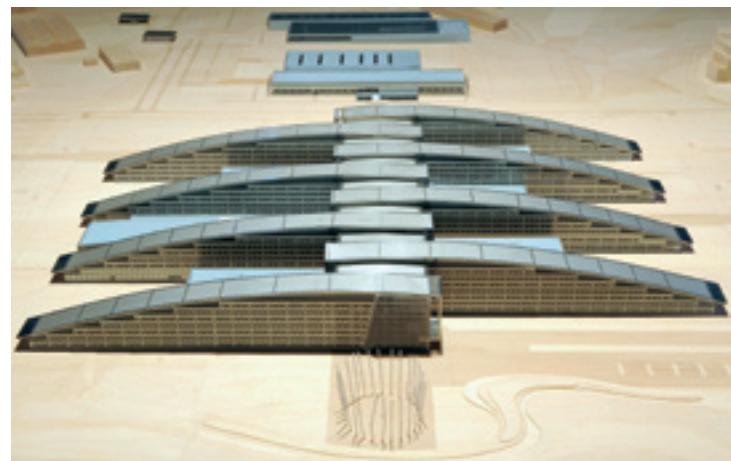
National telephone monopoly Belgacom is considering scrapping up to 3,000 public telephone booths, about one-third of the total in service. According to a spokesman, the rise of the mobile phone has made the telephone booth superfluous. The move would reduce the number of booths to the minimum limit set down by law of 6,000. Telephone booths are used on average four times a week for calls, or a total of 16 minutes per month. In 1997 that figure was 15 hours.

Leuven campaign to free the streets



One in four pedestrians in Leuven is regularly confronted with obstacles on the pavements, according to a new campaign *Red de stoep* (Save the Pavement) launched last week. The campaign is an initiative of a group of organisations, including Mobiel 21, a students' group and the welfare section of the city council. Stacked-up bicycles, cars parked on the pavement and other obstacles present a nuisance to pedestrians, and worse to wheelchair users or parents with children in buggies, the organisers said. The city plans to install more tactile tiles to guide blind people, and make sure all new pavements are at least 1.5 metres wide.

Nato unveils new green HQ



NATO, the Brussels-based North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, is to build a €650 million headquarters building in Brussels to replace temporary facilities erected in 1967 when the organisation was forced by French President General De Gaulle to leave France. The new 250,000-square-metres building is expected to be inaugurated in 2014. The building – eight wings radiating from a single central agora – will take up a 40-hectare site previously occupied by the air force's King Albert Quarter, and will be equipped with ecological roofs and solar panels, as well as rainwater recycling.

Antwerp artist delivers sculptures to Beijing Games



Paul Ibou, the Antwerp-based sculptor, last week delivered two works to Beijing as part of a commission received in 2006 from the Chinese organisers of the Olympic Games. The two statues will be installed in the Olympic Park along with 98 other works, mainly by Chinese sculptors. One, the seven-metre *Seven Steps to Heaven*, designed by Ibou and executed by a Chinese atelier, is a pillar topped by seven steel modules. The second is still being produced, and will be called *Up to the Sky*, consisting of 17 parallelograms topped by an orb. The third work, which will be installed in the city of Shajing, is a 4.5 metre block construction named *Future Recto Verso*.

Brussels Airlines reinstates Paris flight, as Flybe adds Exeter

Brussels Airlines is to reinstate scheduled flights between Brussels and Paris, which were scrapped by the airline's predecessor on the arrival of Thalys in 1996. The daily flight at 09.40 will be contracted to partner company Brussels Airport.

Meanwhile British low-cost airlines Flybe has announced six flights weekly between Brussels and Exeter, serving the south-west of England. This brings the number of UK destinations to 12. The first flights (daily except Saturday, outward at 20.25, inward at 19.55) were last week being offered at £29.99 (about €38) one-way.

Last week a study carried out by the EU revealed that one in three customers buying an airline ticket or flight-package online was being misled. Of 386 websites investigated, 137 were found to be in breach of consumer regulations. Problems include low prices which neglect to mention surcharges, whereas by law the end-price must be displayed. EU Commissioner Meglena Kuneva ordered tour operators and airlines to clean up their act within a year, or she will take judicial action.

Record funds for science research

Flanders has become a research hotspot



Leuven University has strong links with business

Alan Hope

Flanders last year spent almost €175 million on supporting basic research by scientists in all disciplines, a record amount. Of that total, €12 million was spent on "brain circulation" – the policy of allowing scientists to travel abroad and encourage those who have moved away to come back.

The figures come from the latest annual report of the Scientific Research Fund Flanders (FWO). The Fund, which marks its 80th anniversary this year, supports the sort of basic research that the private sector is unwilling to invest in, but which underpins other types of research. The areas of study included medical science, pure science, cultural and language sciences and biological sciences.

ces.

The Fund obtains 72.7% of its funding (€127.2 million) from the Flemish government, with 6.4% (€11.2 m) coming from the federal authorities. The National Lottery contributes 6.7% (€11.7 m).

The purpose of the Fund is to "stimulate knowledge-enhancing, basic research in all scientific disciplines," said FWO Secretary-general Elisabeth Monard. The financing of the projects (submitted by the researchers themselves) is decided on after a competition between universities and after a panel of experts from home and abroad have carefully evaluated the proposals. "The only criterion is the first-rate quality of researcher and proposal," Monard said.

As a result of this support for

basic research, she said, Flemish scientists score "Good to Very Good" in evaluations of their work, taking into account the papers produced and, perhaps more important, the number of times their papers are cited in other publications.

In 2007, grants were given to 2,100 scientists: 720 doctoral students and 750 post-doctoral researchers, with the rest being scientists taken on by the 1,000 or so successful projects. Half of the doctoral students and 36% of post-doctorals are women. "Equal opportunity is an important point for the FWO," Monard said, as are "family-friendly measures".

In addition to FWO funding for basic research, the fund also runs the so-called Odysseus programme, which devotes €12 million annually to finance the return of top research talent to Flanders from international exile, as well as bringing foreign talent here.

So far, since it began in 2006, it has succeeded in attracting 17 researchers, 10 of them Belgian and the rest German, Greek, Italian, Czech, Moldavian and two Dutch. The fund grants them financing of varying amounts (in one case up to €7 million for five years) for the creation of a research team in their particular branch of science.

Among those returning to Flanders is Filip Meysman, a graduate of Leuven and Ghent and an expert in marine biology and oceanography. He has worked on climate change mitigation in Canada, the UK and the Netherlands, and has now come back to the Brussels Free University VUB.

A recent survey carried out by *The Scientist* magazine named Belgium the most attractive place to carry out scientific research. One top scientist attracted to Flanders is Professor Arjen van Witte-loostuijn, a graduate of Groningen and Maastricht, formerly professor at Durham University and working in the field of evolutionary demography at Antwerp University.

Private-sector financing

According to a recent study, most universities receive about a quarter of their research funding from companies, while in some institutions and some areas of research the proportion can be closer to one-half.

The issue raises questions of independence and transparency: how trustworthy is research carried out on behalf of those with a major financial stake in the results? Are companies not motivated to sway the results or even (in cases where the results do not suit them) bury the data completely?

Examples do exist: in 1987 a team of researchers in San Francisco carried out a trial for the makers of a thyroid medication. The trial showed that generic drugs were just as effective as the company's more expensive brand-name treatment. The company, Flint Laboratories, buried the results of the trial for seven years, before pressure from the press brought the case to the attention of the Federal Drug Administration.

The problem has been tackled now, with scientists keen to obtain research funding but insistent that their credibility in the eyes of their peers is not jeopardised. Now, legal experts go through every contract between a research lab and a private-sector financing body, to ensure that the results of the research are not interfered with in any way, and also that they are available for the scientists to publish. "At the end of the day, that is how a scientist makes his name," says Professor Mark Bogaert of the Belgian Centre for Pharmacotherapeutic Information.

According to the academic world, companies may delay publication of research findings to give them time to lodge patent applications, but six months ought to be the maximum delay allowed. And the majority of serious peer-reviewed journals make it an unwavering condition of publication that the nature of private-sector financing is made clear when the results are published.

Flemish region funds "brain exchange"

The Flemish government has put down €1.2 million, to be matched by private funds, to pay for an exchange of brains between the private sector and the academic research world. "We want to make it possible for university scientists to go into the business world," said science and innovation minister Patricia Ceysens. "It also ought to be possible for someone from corporate research to come into the academic world". Part of the salary of the researcher in question would be paid by each side. "This for us is the ideal way to strengthen both sides," said Ceysens.

Another popular way for companies to get inside universities is to endow a professorial chair. At the moment in Flanders, the practice is restricted to Leuven, but as it becomes more common worldwide, it is bound

BUSINESS FLASH



Shutterstock

Limburgse Reversiemaatschappij

Limburgse Reversiemaatschappij (LRM), the Heusden-Zolder company responsible for redevelopment of former mine slag heaps and the adjoining land, will use 17 hectares of its available space to build a €19 million sun park with up to 2,120 solar panels. The complex when is expected to produce enough energy for up to 1,200 households.

S & V

S & V, the Ghent-based company specialised in supply chain management, has been taken over by the Indian Satyam company from Hyderabad.

KBC

KBC, Flanders' largest bank, has confirmed its plans to leave the Slovenian market and has appointed merchant bankers Goldman Sachs to sell its 34% stake in the country's NLB bank. KBC had hoped to develop its activities in the Balkans in partnership with NLB, but reluctance from local interests to allow KBC to increase its stake has forced the Belgian financial institution to reconsider its plans.

Air One

Air One, the Italian airline, is to launch a daily service between Brussels Airport and Rome.

Gores

Gores, the US-based parent of local computer services and software development company RealDolmen, has expressed an interest in the medical imaging activities of Antwerp-based Agfa-Gevaert. The Belgian firm is restructuring its activities and has dropped plans to split into three separate units.

Alfacam

Alfacam, the Lint-based high-definition TV equipment developer, supplied 66 HDTV cameras, trucks and a helicopter, to film the changeover ceremonies between Vladimir Putin and Dmitri Medvedev in Russia.

Premaman

Premaman, the Brussels-based children clothes retailer with 320 shops worldwide, is to open an additional 60 stores this year, including in Shanghai and Dubai. Other projects include openings in Romania, Egypt and Costa Rica.

Essent

Essent, the Dutch energy group, has inaugurated its first Belgian power station in Antwerp. The €130 million gas-fired unit has a capacity of some 135 megawatts.

Foreign enterprises

The number of foreign entrepreneurs increased by 2.7% in 2005, according to the Belgian government's annual report on immigration. The number of self-employed Romanians rose by 90%, while Polish entrepreneurs grew by 65%, making them the fourth largest group of foreign entrepreneurs, after the Dutch, Italians and French.

Work permits up

In 2005, more than 1,200 Indians were issued with special work permits granted to foreigners in high-skill sectors, up 20% on the previous year. Some 1,100 permits were granted to Japanese workers while 256 went to Romanians, putting them in fourth place. A total of 6,448 people received a special work permit in 2005, 9.5% more than the previous year.

to spread to other universities.

Leuven has no fewer than 68 chairs financed by businesses, most of them pharmaceuticals companies, including Pfizer, Bayer and Roche, makers of Valium. Electrabel has endowed a chair in the engineering science faculty. Accountants Deloitte have endowed a chair in corporate governance in the faculty of economics and business.

Leuven is clear about what is required: companies have to sign up for a three-to-five-year term, paying €65,000 a year, which is tax-deductible. According to Leuven's head of fund-raising, Isabel Penne, companies have no say in the research carried out under their name. "The choice of faculty is made during negotiations," she said. "But the company's involvement goes no further than that."



Flemish paintings come home

Fifty Flemish paintings from the British royal collection are on show in Brussels. This is one exhibition you don't want to miss

Derek Blyth

When you first see it, Pieter Bruegel the Elder's painting of "The Massacre of the Innocents" looks, well, innocent. Bruegel set the scene in a snow-covered Flemish village in the depths of winter. It is only when you look more closely that you notice the Spanish troops massed in the background, while their comrades get down to the grim task of killing the innocent.

Bruegel's painting forms the highlight in a major exhibition of Flemish paintings from the Royal Collection of Queen Elizabeth II. First shown in the royal palace in Edinburgh, and later at Buckingham Palace in London, this exhibition makes its final stop in the Flemish city that was home to many of the artists.

Most of the works have not been seen in Flanders since they were sold and shipped to Britain several centuries ago. The British royal family has always had a fondness for the sensual baroque art of Rubens and Van Dyck. In fact, both artists spent long periods in England painting portraits of royalty and aristocrats, and both earned the title "sir" to put before their Flemish names.

The exhibition traces the links back to King Charles I, who was a close friend of Rubens and owned a self-portrait of the artist presented as a gift when he was still Prince of Wales. Charles I and the other royal collectors greatly admired Rubens' mellow landscapes, which inspired English landscape artists such as Gainsborough and Constable. The exhibition has three of his greatest landscapes from the

Queen's walls on show, including a lovely painting titled "The Farm at Laken".

The Brussels museum is exhibiting a total of 51 paintings from the royal galleries, including rarely-seen works by Memling, Metsys, Gossaert, Rubens and Van Dyck. Visitors in Brussels have the added bonus – not possible in the Edinburgh and London shows – of seeing these works displayed alongside Flemish masterpieces from the Belgian royal collection.

The exhibition includes some surprises, such as "Boy at a Window", a painting of an unknown sitter by an unknown artist uses a clever visual device to suggest that the boy is resting on a window ledge and tapping at a glass pane.

There is also a gorgeously detailed painting titled "A Cabinet

of Pictures" by Jacob de Formentrou, showing various Flemish paintings within a painting, alongside collections of shells, coins and insects.

But it's Pieter Bruegel the Elder's "Massacre of the Innocents" that steals the show. Its impact is enhanced by it being hung – possibly for the first time ever – next to a Bruegel from the Fine Arts Museum collection showing "The Census at Bethlehem".

The message is clear. The Brussels painting shows the officials of King Herod noting down the names of the newly-born children who were due to be slaughtered, while the Queen's painting refers to the massacre that followed soon after. But look more closely and you will notice that the Queen's painting doesn't show children being killed; it shows nothing

more horrific than soldiers slaughtering animals.

Bruegel painted the "Massacre" at a time when Spanish soldiers, just like the faceless killers in the painting, were slaughtering heretics throughout the Low Countries. The artist painted it as a cry of rage against the cruelty of the age, like Goya's paintings of the horrors of war or Picasso's "Guernica".

The owner of the painting, Emperor Rudolph II, was offended by Bruegel's criticism of the Spanish regime. So he ordered an artist to paint over the images of children and replace them with animals or bundles of clothes. As a result, Bruegel's painting loses much of its sharp edge. It is only by looking closely that you see traces of blood left in the snow, evidence of an awful crime that has been covered up.

In Bruegel's Footsteps

Pieter Bruegel the Elder painted some of his greatest works in the countryside outside Brussels, including the *Massacre of the Innocents*. Denzil Walton follows in his footsteps to the Pajottenland villages of Dilbeek and Peer.

Confusion surrounds the early life of Pieter Bruegel the Elder. No-one knows for sure when he was born or where he came from; some time in the early to mid-1520s is as close as it gets to a date of birth. He added to the confusion by spelling his name in two ways: Brueghel until 1559, Bruegel afterwards, although his sons retained the "h" in the spelling of their names.

The only mention of the painter's birthplace is in *The life of Pieter Bruegel, a famous painter from Brueghel* by Karel Van Mander, who wrote in 1603 that Bruegel "was born in Brabant in an obscure farmers' village named Brueghel and located not far from Breda".

There are two possible locations for this farmers' village. One is Breugel near Eindhoven, the Netherlands, although this is 60 km from Breda. The other is Brogel near Peer, Belgium, in the region that was once called Brabant. Not surprisingly, the latter theory is very popular in Peer, self-styled Bruegelstad, or Bruegel town.



What we do know is that in 1551 Bruegel was accepted into the Antwerp painters' guild and apprenticed to Pieter Coecke van Aelst, a leading Antwerp artist, sculptor, architect and designer of tapestry and stained glass. The following year he travelled to Italy, where he comple-

ted a number of landscapes. He returned to Antwerp in 1553, but 10 years later moved permanently to Brussels, where he married van Aelst's daughter, Mayken, in 1563. Their children, Pieter Brueghel the Younger and Jan Brueghel the Elder, both became painters.

Bruegel the Elder is sometimes called "peasant Bruegel", from his scenes of peasant life. Yet he covered a wide range of other subjects: Biblical scenes, parables of Christ, mythologies and social satires. He found his greatest inspiration in nature, and his mountain landscapes in particular are widely praised. Popular in his own day, his works have been consistently admired since his death in Brussels in 1569. In line with his origins, the exact date remains a mystery; it was some time between September 5 and 9.

Bruegel in Dilbeek

From 1559 to 1569, Bruegel lived in the Hoogstraat in the Marollen district of Brussels. He visited the villages to the south-west of Brussels in search of themes; the Pede Valley that flows through Dilbeek and Itterbeek was the source of much of his inspiration. In *The Parable of the Blind*, the village church of St. Anna Pede can be recognised just as it looks today, while St. Pieter's church in Itterbeek can be spotted in *The Harvesters*. In *The Magpie on the Gallows*, the watermill at Pede is included in the background, while the winding river, apple trees and fields in *The Peasant and the Nest Robber* are typical of the Pajotten-

land landscape in the area surrounding Dilbeek.

The Bruegel Open Air Museum in Dilbeek was opened in 2004 to trace the links between Bruegel's paintings and the landscapes that inspired them. Accessible by foot or bicycle, it offers a unique opportunity to admire 19 large-scale waterproof reproductions of Bruegel's paintings in the very spots where they were painted. On the eight-kilometre Bruegel path along the Pede Valley, walkers come across 11 paintings, while seven others can be found on the 20-kilometre Bruegel cycle route. Many of the reproductions were selected because they contain recognisable elements of Dilbeek.

Both routes start from the church of St. Anna Pede, which can be reached from Brussels South Station by De Lijn bus number 118. Leaflets describing the Bruegel walk (free) and the cycle route (€1.75), as well as a more comprehensive booklet (€3) describing the paintings in the Open Air Museum, can be picked up at Dilbeek Cultural Centre, Gemeenteplein, Groot-Bijgaarden, tel: 02.464.60.10; email: cultuur@dilbeek.be.

Bruegel in Peer

Proud of its association with Bruegel, the town of Peer has laid out an attractive 25-kilometre cycle route through the surrounding countryside. At convenient intervals, you can take a break and examine large-scale reproductions of Bruegel's paintings, including *Children's Games*, *Haymaking*

and *The Peasant Dance*, which are believed to represent the countryside around Peer.

Bikes can be rented from €8 per day from the Bruegelhoeve Activity Centre. You can also pick up a free leaflet describing the route and the paintings on display. The Bruegel cycle route passes the centre. At weekends and during summer holidays it is recommended to reserve a cycle in advance. Contact: Bruegelhoeve, Weyerstraat 1, 3990 Peer, tel: 011.63.13.31; email: info@breugelhoeve.be

Discovering more

The organisation Culturama provides guided art and historical tours around Brussels, including a guided tour through the Open Air Museum of Dilbeek, given by art historian Machteld De Schrijver. The tour is available in English, Dutch, French or German.

A 96-minute multilingual DVD titled *Bruegel, the genius of Flemish painting* is also available from Culturama. The first part describes Bruegel as a novelist who uses his brushes to depict the village, peasant life, the city, war and the gospels, while the second part investigates Bruegel's individuality as a painter by examining his brushwork and colour composition.

Online
www.culturamavzw.be

Big in Japan

Professor Yoko Mori from the Meiji University in Tokyo, Japan, was a recent visitor to the Open Air Museum in Dilbeek. Professor Mori is a passionate fan of Bruegel and has researched and written many articles and books on the artist, the latest being *Looking for Bruegel: The Power of Folk Culture*, published in February this year. Denzil Walton talks to him about his passion for the Flemish artist.

What was your impression of the Open Air Museum in Dilbeek?

I think it's extraordinary. It's such a good idea because it enables visitors to see where some of the landscapes in Bruegel's pictures were painted. I first visited St. Anna Pede in 1970, and I was so thrilled to recognise the church, the river, the village pond, the orchards and the fields that Bruegel captured so delightfully in many of his paintings.

How much interest is there for Bruegel in Japan?

Outside Europe, Japan probably loves Bruegel more than any other country. Japanese people appreciate the changes in the seasons, the nature and the everyday country folk working in the fields which are found in Bruegel's paintings.

What personally do you value about his paintings?

Bruegel skilfully and uniquely captured folk culture such as feasts, children's games and labourers' activities. He observed real human values – not occupations, social classes or intellect, but humanity. He was especially interested in the various facial expressions of the country folk as they worked hard to bring in the harvest. I think no other artist evokes modern social problems such as the loss of children's games, the massacre of people (*The Triumph of Death*), pride and vanity (*The Tower of Babel*).



Soft focus

Kris Dewitte stands back to stand out

Lisa Bradshaw

Flemish photographer Kris Dewitte is a lurker. You won't find him fighting his way to the first row of paparazzi at a red carpet event calling out the names of celebs to get them to turn his way. He'll be the guy hanging around across the street. Waiting.

Waiting is most of what Dewitte does for a living. On movie sets, at film festivals and during premieres, he's unobtrusive, until he sees the shot. Then he points, shoots and waits some more. "It's a different

the director, actors and a myriad of cameramen and technicians. His ability to pick the precise moment of perfect impact produces photos that often blur the lines between what is real and what is being played for the camera – sometimes the movie camera, sometimes his.

"I see photographers getting nervous because they haven't shot anything after being on the set for two hours. But that's normal. You have to live with it, or you don't do it," says Dewitte. The same is true off the set. At a festival, "it can

to travel to the other side of the world for a 15-minute shoot, I do it. Going to do your job isn't what's important. What's important is what remains. It's the photograph."

This attitude shines through in *Still Project*, Dewitte's first exhibition in four years, which stops off in Genk, Limburg province, on its way back from Amsterdam and before moving on to Poland. A Japanese gallery has shown interest in showing it after that. "I'm very excited because I've never been

"At the red carpet, they're all taking the same photos. I'm across the street to capture something different"

kind of angle," he says.

Not all photographers are so patient – which is why not all photographers are invited to every single film set in Belgium. Dewitte is famous throughout the country for capturing the essence of a shoot – the interaction between

take days to get an appointment with a big name." For the shot of Juliette Lewis above, he waited 12 months.

But the Ghent-based photographer, who is also a regular on sets in the Netherlands and France, isn't complaining. "If they ask me

there," says Dewitte, "and I love what they're doing in the east with cinema these days and for the last 20 years. The way they use colour is very much what I do; they use it to create a certain atmosphere."

Though it might seem contrary, *Still Project* is a black-and-white

show. But it's the lack of colour that creates the atmosphere. "I can put more of myself in black-and-white," the Flemish photographer explains. "Colour photography is another way of thinking, and sometimes colours distract in a way. With black-and-white photography, the expression of the person really has to come out, and the expression in the frame is the most important thing for me."

Dewitte is a freelance photographer who does other kinds of work, but it's only the film work that winds up in the galleries. "Film has always been in my life, even when I was a kid," he admits. "I remember already in the schoolyard, we were always talking about film." Dewitte studied graphic design and then photography in Ghent, and one weekend a fellow student suggested they up and take the train to Cannes Film Festival. "I wasn't a big traveller, and it was like the main event of cinema," smiles Dewitte. "I remember the opening film was Luc Besson's *Le Grand*

bleu. I was 19. From that moment, I've been going every year."

Dewitte took along his camera that first year and discovered the joy of the unexpected shot. From the beginning, he avoided the crowds of other photographers moving in to catch the glamour. "I don't see myself in that crowd; I don't feel good there," he says. "I'm actually very shy. If there are more than two people around, I will take a step backward."

It's these candid shots of actors just being themselves, though, that both the media and the actors really love. Dewitte says he gets many of his appointments with actors by finding a chance to show his work directly to them, rather than making calls and going through agents.

Other times he just gets lucky. Of his more than 1,000 photos, one of his favourites is of actor Steve Buscemi (*Fargo*, *Interview*) during Cannes. Dewitte was late for the official shoot with several other photographers. But

when he finally arrived an hour later, Buscemi "was still around, resting, lying in a bus." Dewitte approached him and got a 30-minute private photo shoot. "It was the end of the day, and the light was perfect," he says. And the actor "was very nice. He didn't have any pressure of agents around him, and he was relaxed. You know, he was just Steve Buscemi."

Another career high was a shot of French actress Charlotte Rampling (*Under the Sand, Swimming Pool*). "She stayed once in Veurne, where I grew up, to work on a film. I was only 13, but I was already totally into her," Dewitte recalls. "It took me years to get a photo with her. She told me she hadn't done a photo shoot in a long time." When Dewitte presented her with the best photo of the bunch, Rampling, who has an interest in photography, looked at it for quite a long time. "Finally, she said 'it's very nice, I would like to have it, is it for me?' The way she looked at it and the time she took and



Above, top: On the set of the Flemish short film *Meander*. Above, bottom: Behind the scenes of the Dutch film *Nadine*



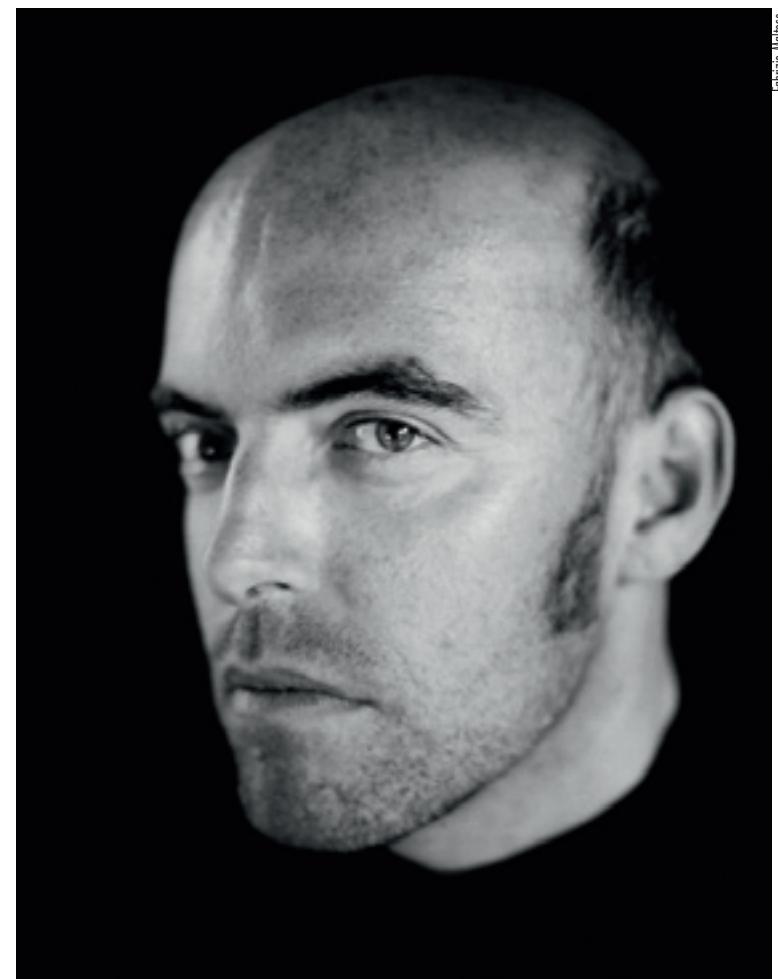
"The expression in the frame is the most important thing": Dewitte's shot of Tilda Swinton

her response, well, if these people appreciate what you're doing..." Dewitte doesn't know how to end the sentence. He doesn't have to. The work speaks for itself.

Still Project, 16 May-28 June, Cultuurcentrum Genk, Dieplaan 2, Genk

Online
www.cultuurcentrumgenk.be

Fabrizio Mollica



On the other side of the lens: Kris Dewitte

CLEARLY NOT MOVED BY GOSSELIN



The items you treasure most deserve the greatest attention when you move. They are treated with the utmost care by those meticulous men sent by Gosselin, who wrap them in that specific Gosselin paper and move them in accordance with the Gosselin master plan specially drawn up for you. Gosselin has over 70 years' experience in VIP treatment. Their service is so impeccable that you will be moved when you see their specialists at work.

Gosselin was the first moving company in Belgium to have achieved FAIM/ISO, the international moving industry's most prestigious accreditation. With their 32 own branches across Europe, Central-Asia and the Caucasus, you will no doubt receive the service you have always been looking for.



lacma



AMSA



WE KNOW HOW TO MOVE PEOPLE

Belcrownlaan 23 | B-2100 Antwerp - Belgium
T +32-3-360 55 00 | T +32-2-772 34 87 | F +32-3-360 55 79

WWW.GOSSELINGROUP.EU | INFO@GOSSELINGROUP.EU



GOSSELIN MOVING

BELGIUM - MEMBER GOSSELIN GROUP

Cold sweat

A system of man-made caves have supported a part of Limburg province for centuries

Photos by Monique Philips



Monique Philips

During the night of 21 March, the earth gave way in a field in Zichen and left a hole measuring 40 square metres. This, however, came as no surprise to the local authorities, who constantly monitor the caves under their village. Heavy rain can particularly destabilise them, resulting in ground slides on the surface.

Zichen is part of the triplet Zichen-Zussen-Bolder villages in the far reaches of southeast Limburg province. Quarries were big business in this region, known as Mergeland; in fact, the cave system in question started out as a man-made quarry to extract the lime-rich mergel, or marlstone, from the ground.

There are two places where tourists can visit the chilly Mergel Caves (a constant nine to 11 degrees Celsius). On the hill in nearby Kanne, which was an industrial quarry, you can follow the guide every Sunday into the majestic underground tunnels. In Zichen, you can visit the cave system known as "the pit". It's here that you are destined to meet Mr Mon Heynen.

This charming man was engaged in local politics as alderman for

tourism for over 30 years, but, as his wife Agnes explains, his heart lies subsoil. Heynen remembers vividly how he, as a young boy, went down in the pits with rest of the village to hide during the Second World War. "We stayed here for weeks," he tells me from an underground vantage point. "The priest even held mass down here at this altar. The American names on these walls are from the soldiers who came down here to announce the end of the war."

These man-made ground warrens have, in fact, always provided the villages with fortune. The Romans extracted the lime-rich stone and, starting in the middle ages, farmers found extra income to get through the winter by cutting blocks of marlstone underneath their own houses to sell. "The owner of a surface lot also owns the ground underneath," explains Heynen. "Villagers built their houses from stones they extracted through a small shaft by rope." Marlstone was – and still is – a widely-used building material, and farmers could also use the powder from it as fertiliser. Corridors were fashioned to connect underground spaces, and a cave system was born.

When Heynen saw the success of the tours in Kanne, he knocked

out a larger entrance in his backyard and opened up the Zichen caves for visitors, too. He is, indeed, the perfect guide – telling with humour and genuine fervour the story of these underground trenches, which are smaller and less-known than Kanne's, but which are decorated like a kind of art gallery.

One of Zichen's charcoal tableaus depicts the 1747 Battle of Lauffeld, in which Louis XV defeated the joint armies of Austria, the Netherlands and England on this patch of ground. The French won, thanks to the Irish brigades fighting on their side. The Irish lost 800 men, the French 10,000 and the allied forces 7,000. An Irish cross still marks the spot of the massacre.

Once marlstone went out of fashion, locals used the large communal cellar to grow endive, asparagus, rhubarb and mushrooms. The horse manure used was sometimes hauled back up to spread over the land, while other farmers covered over the underground layers with marlstone. That's why some cave floors come up higher, requiring you to duck your head to get through. "Where it's narrower you know you're passing under the house of a rich farmer with plenty of horse

manure to spare," says Heynen.

At one point, Zichen provided 95% of Belgian mushrooms, mostly grown below ground. This ended dramatically when, in 1958, a cave in the Roosenburcht area collapsed on Christmas Eve, killing 18 people. Some bodies were retrieved, others were lost forever. The few mushrooms still grown in caves are brownish and take eight weeks to mature rather than the six days of other varieties. The caves are also used for a bit of bio-cheese ripening and wine aging, but mining activity is strictly forbidden. "We have to go across the border to the Netherlands to buy marlstone," complains Heynen.

Just across the language border in Wallonia, on the other side of the "mountain" (as the locals call the hill in Kanne), two factories are digging up an entire hillside to turn marl into cement. This is to the dismay of nature activists – the caves harbour all sorts of bats, while the clay soil on top attracts an interesting array of insects, birds, badgers and even wild hamsters.

The Maas is one of the three waterways shaping this landscape. The man-made Albert canal, with its pleasure boat port, comes down all the way from Antwerp to meet the Jeker River. This brook follows the Jeker valley, one of the most surprising road trips in Limburg. Following the 20-kilometre route from Tongeren to Kanne, you pass under the E313 motorway and through small Walloon and Flemish villages alternatively.

All along the Jeker River are marl pits and marlstone houses. The blocks have to be laid in a certain way, otherwise they'll crumble. Used well, they withstand 2,000 years, as recent excavations of the foundations of the Roman city walls in Tongeren show. And you won't find one medieval edifice, church or farmhouse in the Maasland area of the Netherlands that wasn't built with the soft and warm marlstone.

In the area of Riemst, a larger

town just north of Zichen, there are 300 kilometres of caves, nine-tenths of which are considered dangerously unstable, but the entire cave system extends all the way past Valkenburg and Maastricht in the Netherlands. So, apart from the official cave entrances, the fields and valley slopes are dotted with unofficial openings. Farmers use them to stock hay, potatoes or even as stables for cows.

The fascinating maze also attracts a special kind of hobbyists: *berglopers*, or cave runners. They meet up on Friday nights and roam the long corridors, making maps, tracing wall markings on paper or just hanging out.

The history of the Mergel Caves is, literally, written on the walls. Illiterate workmen employed in the quarries throughout the centuries vented their frustration by drawing their boss swinging from a gallows. The nearer the picture to the top of the corridor, the older it is. The 95% humidity conserves them beautifully.

In Maastricht, monks liked to dwell in the subterranean maze, too. According to local legend, in 1640, four of them went in, got lost, and their remains were discovered years later. Their fingers were blunted from feeling the walls in the dark.

Extreme caution is indeed required for those who want to venture into these quarries on their own. The beam of a flashlight is swallowed up by the darkness of eight-metre-high corridors. Just 15 years ago, two Dutch students from Maastricht went missing. After five days someone had the idea to look for them in the caves, but it took another five days to find them. Heynen was part of the search party. "We came too late," he says.

To book a tour of the Mergel Caves in Zichen, call 012.440.375

Online
www.riemst.be



Mon Heynen takes you into the winding caverns from the entrance in his back garden

Classical & new music**Brussels**

Bozar (Paleis voor Schone Kunsten)
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be

Concerts at 20.00

MAY 14 Alban Berg Quartet: Haydn, Berg, Schubert

MAY 15 deFilharmonie conducted by Josep Pons: Ravel, de Falla, Stravinsky

MAY 16 Vlaams Radio Orkest conducted by Michel Tabachnik, with Severin von Eckardstein, piano: Debussy, Saint-Saëns

MAY 21-24 Queen Elisabeth Singing Competition 2008 Final with La Monnaie Symphony Orchestra conducted by Kazushi Ono

De Munt

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39
MAY 23 12.30 Sinéad Mulhern, soprano; Rachel Andrist, piano: songs by Verdi, Rachmaninov, Barber

Flagey

Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20,
www.flagey.be

MAY 16 20.30 Piet Kuijken and Boyan Vodenitcharov, fortepiano: Clementi, Paisiello, Mozart

MAY 19 20.15 Anima Eterna conducted by Jos van Immerseel, with Rian De Waal, piano: Liszt, Grieg, Berlioz

MAY 22 20.15 Vlaams Radio Koor and Musa Hori choir conducted by Peter Dajans, with Ludo Mariën, accordion: Martin, De Ley, François, Nees, Mahler

Musical Instruments Museum

Hofberg 2; 0900.28.877
MAY 16-18 11.00 & 14.00 Queen Elisabeth Singing Competition 2008: masterclasses with Helmut Deutsch, Brigitte Fasbaender and Peter Kooij

Royal Music Conservatory

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37
MAY 14 15.00 & 20.00 Queen Elisabeth Singing Competition 2008 semi-finals

Saint Michael and St Gudula Cathedral

Sinter-Goedeleplein; 02.217.83.45
MAY 18 20.30 Sonic Cathedral: Ensemble Musique Nouvelles: Bach, Desso, Tavener, Pärt (Nuits Botanique)

Get your tickets now for...**John Cale and Lou Reed**

25 June (Cale) and 16 July (Reed), Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23, Brussels. Tickets from 02.507.82.00 or www.bozar.be

You can't exactly call it a reunion, but that's okay with us. The legendary Velvet Underground's original leadmen, guitarist Lou Reed and bassist John Cale, both play Bozar this summer – albeit separately. No surprise, since the two could only work together for three years in the first place in the band's early days of the mid-1960s. Cale (photo), a Welshman, came to the US to study classical music, and his viola and piano-driven experimental mixtures have stayed true to form right through to his current acoustical trio. Reed is pure American distortion rock with the lyrical edge (in both words and sound) for which he is famous. Although this concert of his dark 1973 album *Berlin* might just appeal to Cale fans as well: he is accompanied by both a wind and string ensemble and the New London Children's Choir.

Sint-Marcuskerk

de Frélaan 72; 02.331.37.14,
www.32sonates.be
MAY 23 20.00 Olivier De Spiegeleir, piano: Beethoven's sonatas No 6, 17, 22, 21

Tour & Taxis

Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49

MAY 17 20.00 Orchestre Jeunes de Liège, conducted by Alain Duvivier; Chœur Odyssée, conducted by Cécile Bolle; Chorale de la Pastourelle de Charleroi, conducted by Eric Depré: music by John Williams for Star Wars and other Hollywood films

Antwerp**deSingel**

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28

Concerts at 20.00

MAY 15 Power Flower: Champ d'Action in a programme of music linking 1960s ground-breaking musicians, such as Jimi Hendrix and John Cage, with contemporary composers James Tenney, Gavin Bryars and Michael Nyman.

MAY 16 Frank Braley, piano; Renaud Capuçon, violin; Gautier Capuçon, cello: Schubert piano trios

MAY 17 Christianne Stotijn, mezzo; Julius Drake, piano: lieder by Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Duparc, Debussy's Chansons de Bilitis

MAY 22 Yossif Ivanov, violin; Itamar Golan, piano: Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms

Bruges**Concertgebouw**

't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02

MAY 14 20.00 Renaud Capuçon, violin; Gautier Capuçon, cello; Frank Braley, piano: Schubert piano trios

MAY 16 20.00 London Sinfonietta and Synergy Vocals conducted by Jurjen Hempel, with Peter Greenaway, libretto, film and live visuals; Brody Neuenchwander, live calligraphy: Twin, Varèse, Stravinsky, Bryars, Lang and Greenaway

Ghent**De Bijloke**

Jozef Kluykensstraat 2, 09.269.92.92
Concerts at 20.00:

MAY 15 Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir conducted by Paul Hillier: works by Arvo Pärt and

medieval polyphony

MAY 17 Vlaams Radio Orkest conducted by Michel Tabachnik, with Severin von Eckardstein, piano: Debussy, Saint-Saëns, Ravel

MAY 23 Andrew Manze and Richard Egarr: Mozart, Schubert

Ostend**Kursaal (Casino)**

Monacoplein; 070.22.56.00,

www.sherpa.be

MAY 17 19.15 Yevgeni Moguilevsky, piano: Schumann, Brahms, Chopin

Jazz & blues**Brussels****Art Base**

Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20

MAY 23 Brussels Jazz Marathon: 18.00 screening of historical jazz images 19.00 Ben Sluijs 21.00 Radabenath

Atelier 210

Sint-Pieterssteenweg 210; 02.732.25.98,

www.atelier210.be

MAY 19 21.00 Julien Hucq Quartet

Auderghem Cultural Centre

Vorstlaan 183; 02.660.03.03

MAY 18 15.30 Daddy's Darlings & The Big Bang Boys

Brasserie de L'Union

Sint-Gillisvoordeplein 55; 02.538.15.79

MAY 18 12.00-15.00 Carson Barnes & friends

Flagey

Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20,

www.flagey.be

MAY 15 21.30 Robin Verheyen International Quartet 'Painting Space'

MAY 23 12.30 Määk's Spirit

Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193; 02.733.13.78

MAY 14 20.30 Gowk **MAY 15** 20.30 KMG's **MAY 17** 18.00 Jojoba **MAY 21** The Unplayables

La Brocante Thoumas

Blaesstraat 170; 02.512.13.43

MAY 17 12.00-16.00 Carson Barnes & friends

Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpenstraat 28; 02.512.92.50,

www.soundsjazzclub.be

Concerts at 22.00

MAY 14 Caribe Con K, Caribbean

music **MAY 15** Sara So Far Quartet

MAY 16 Marc Demuth Quartet with

Sofia Ribeiro **MAY 17** Mikkel Ploug

Group with Mark Turner **MAY 19**

Master Session **MAY 20** Da Romeo

Band **MAY 21** Chamaquindo, salsa

MAY 22 symmEtrio

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45

Concerts at 20.30

MAY 14 Action Reaction **MAY 15** Jan Gerfast Blues Band **MAY 16** Music

Music Music (Sweden) **MAY 17** Yvonne

Walter & André Donni Quartet, the

music of Billy Strayhorn **MAY 19**

Marie sings Henri Salvador **MAY 21**

Salsablonsera

Théâtre Marni

Vergniestraat 25; 02.354.43.68

MAY 20-22 20.30 Marni Jazz Rendez

Vous: **MAY 20** Angelini-Fonda-Lopez

MAY 21 Nicolas Kummert Group-

Voices **MAY 22** Gaia Quattro

Antwerp**Luchtbal Cultuurcentrum**

Columbiestraat 110; 03 543 90 30,

www.ccluchtbl.org

MAY 14 20.30 Sylvie Courvoisier

Ghent**Vooruit**

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 09.267.28.28

Concerts at 20.00

MAY 15 Tutu Puoane Quartet **MAY**

20 Puma/Tyft with Hilmar Jansson,

Andrew d'Angelo & Jim Black, jazz/

electronic

MAY 22 Palenque son Karibe,

Caribbean music

MAY 23 Chota Divana (Rajasthan)

Kortrijk**De Kreun**

Jan Persijnstraat 6; 056.37.06.44

MAY 16 20.00 Christian Prommer's

Drum Lesson

Pop, rock, hip-hop, soul**Brussels****Ancienne Belgique**

Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24

Concerts at 20.00

MAY 14 Bjorn Berge **MAY 15** I Love

Sarah + Fuck Buttons **MAY 16** Booka

Dimitris Dimitriadis (in Greek with Dutch and French surtitles, part of *Kunstfestivaldesarts*)

Antwerp

Stadsschouwburg

Theaterplein 1; 077.37.38.39
Until MAY 25 *Porgy & Bess* by Gershwin (in English)

Bruges

De Werf

Werfstraat 108; 050.33.05.29
MAY 16 20.30 *Monk in Niezogekapoëzie zoslechverkoopt* (in Dutch)

Visual arts

Brussels

Argos Centre for Art and Media

Werfstraat 13; 02 229 00 03, www.argosarts.org
Until JUNE 21 *No Place Like Home: Perspectives on Migration in Europa*, Belgian and international artists' videos, photographs and installations

Arts en Marge

Hoogstraat 312; 02.511.04.11
Until MAY 17 *Allemaal Beestjes*, outsider art group show on the theme of real and imaginary animals

Atomium

Atomium Square; 02.475.47.72, www.atomium.be
Until OCT 19 *Expo 58: Between Utopia and Reality*, documents, plans, objects, films, photographs and scale models of Expo 58
Until OCT 19 *Lucien De Roock's Star*, design of the famous symbol of Expo 58
Until OCT 19 *The Pavilion of Temporary Happiness*, built from 33,000 drink crates to house screenings and exhibitions about World Fairs (near the Atomium on Louis Steensplein)

Box Gallery

Maliestraat 88; 02.537.95.55
Until MAY 17 *De la misma carne*, photographs by Alberto García-Alix

Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.84.44
Until MAY 18 *Jan Fabre: Borrowed time*, work by the Flemish artist paired with photographs from his performances
Until MAY 25 *Paul Klee: Theater Here, There and Everywhere*, monographic exhibition on the Berne-based artist (1879-1940)
Until JUNE 15 *Skal*: drinking horns, richly ornamented drinking horns from the Reykjavík museum's collection

CIVA

Kluisstraat 55; 02.642.24.71, www.civa.be
Until JUNE 10 *Shanghai-Brussels: ARCHITopia 2*, recent architectural works in Shanghai
Until SEP 19 *Documents on the gardens* designed by René Pechère and Jacques Boulanger-François for Expo 58

Charliermuseum

Kunstlaan 16; 02.507.83.31, www.charliermuseum.be
Until JUNE 20 *Landschap en natuur*, landscape paintings and drawings, with work by Fernand Khnopff, James Ensor, Louis Crémén, Jakob Smits and Guillaume Vogels, among others

Costume and Lace Museum

Violettestraat 12; 02.213.44.50
Until MAY 27 *Weefsels van het absolute (Absolute Fibres)*, textiles by outsider artists
Until DEC 30 *Van New Look tot Expo 58*, women's fashion from the time of Belgium's 1958 World's Fair, with evening gowns, wedding dresses, cocktail dresses, suits, coats and accessories

De Loge Architectuur museum

Kluisstraat 86; 02.649.86.65
Until SEP 28 *Belgie/Belgique 58*, architectural and decorative forms at the time of Belgium's 1958 World's Fair,

with drawings, photographs, models, posters and furniture

De Markten

Oude Graanmarkt 5; 02.512.34.25
Until MAY 31 Exhibitions x 5, multimedia shows on Brussels' Zinneke Parade

Design Flanders

Kanselarijstraat 19; 02.227.60.60
Until JUNE 1 Furniture design, art and architecture by Frans Van Praet

Embassy of Brazil

Louisaalaan 350; 02.640.20.15
Until MAY 23 *After School*, paintings by Brazilian artists

Erasmus House

Kapittelstraat 31; 02.521.13.83
Until JUNE 15 *Anatomie van de Ijdhelden (Anatomy of Vanity)*, the museum's 75th anniversary show, with work by Hieronymus Bosch, Jan Fabre, Hans Holbein, Marie-Jo Lafontaine, Aïda Kazarian and Quinten Metsys

Espace Photographic Contretype

Verbindingslaan 1; 02.538.42.20
Until JUNE 15 *Un monde inquiétant*, photographs by Julien Coulommier

ISELP

Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70
Until MAY 31 *Récits (Stories)*, paintings by Cécilia Shishan

Until MAY 31 *Jewellery and ceramics* by Axelle Gielen

Until JUNE 21 *De Narcisse à Alice: Miroirs et reflets en question (Questioning Mirrors and Reflections)*, group show

Instituto Cervantes

Tervurenlaan 64; 02.737.01.90
Until MAY 16 *Sin poder dejar de sentir (Unable to Stop Feeling)*, photographs by Isaac Montoya

Jewish Moroccan Heritage Museum

Vander Elstplein 19; 02.343.86.30
Until MAY 15 *Freud au Maroc: Regards sur l'identité (Looking at Identity)*, the Dahan-Hirsch collection of art, books and objects illustrating Jewish culture in Morocco

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimenstraat 21; 02.512.19.63, www.mj-b-jmb.org
Until JUNE 22 *Dicht op de huid (Close to the Skin)*, paintings by Brussels-based artist Maurice Frydman

La Cambre Architecture

Flageyplein 19; 02.640.96.96
Until MAY 17 *Corps de Ville (Body of the City)*, photography and architecture biennial with works by 20 Belgian and French photographers

Le Botanique

Koningstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
Until MAY 17 *Paintings, graphic design, photographs, animation and graffiti art* by some 20 members of the international art collective *No New Enemies* (*Nuits Botanique*)

René Magritte Museum

Esseghemstraat 135; 02.428.26.26
Until JUNE 30 *Dreaming of a Future World*, paintings and drawings by the Flemish artist Edmond van Dooren

Royal Army Museum

Jubelpark 3; 02.737.77.33
Until JUNE 29 *(H)erkennig! 175 jaar Leopoldsorde en Nationale Orden*, exhibition on the oldest Belgian military order
Until NOV 30 *A Paintbrush in the Barrel*, World War One paintings, drawings and etchings by soldiers

Royal Library

Kunstberg; 02.519.58.73
Until AUG 24 *In de ban van boeken*, Belgian book collectors, 1750 to 1850

Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11, www.fine-arts-museum.be

Until JULY 6 *Paintings and sculpture* by contemporary South Korean artist Lee Ufan

May 16-SEP 21 *The British Royal Collection*. From Bruegel to Rubens, fifty paintings from the Queen Elizabeth II's collection, with major works by Hans Memling, Quinten Metsys, Jan Gossaert, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Paul Bril, Peter Paul Rubens and Antoon Van Dyck, shown alongside masterpieces from Brussels' Fine Arts Museum

May 16-AUG 31 *Plecnik Project*, life and professional achievements of Slovene architect Joze Plecnik (1872-1957)

Royal Museum for Central Africa

Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11
Until AUG 31 *Knock on Wood!* Forest and Wood in Africa, thematic exhibition on African trees and forests and their need for sustainable management

Until OCT 19 *Expo 58*, films and photographs, ethnographic objects, plants, artwork and animals that were displayed in the seven pavilions dedicated to the Belgian Congo at Brussels' World's Fair in 1958

Stadhuis

Grote Markt; 02.279.43.50
Until MAY 18 *Slovenian Painting after 1945*

Tour & Taxis

Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49
Until MAY 12 *It's Our History!*, multi-media exhibition on the development of the EU and the lives of European citizens since 1945

Until JUNE 1 *Star Wars*, interactive exhibition with artwork, costumes and objects from the cult science fiction films

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.347.30.33
Until JULY 27 *Mike Kelley Educational Complex Onwards: 1995-2008*, retrospective with large-scale installations, sculptures, paintings and photographs

Young Gallery/Hotel Conrad

Louisalaan 75b; 02.374.07.04
Until MAY 17 *AirCraft*, photographs by Jeffrey Milstein

Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum (MuHKA)

Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60
Until SEP 9 *Fantasy*, intervention by Koen van den Broek

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
Until MAY 18 *Janssens' Works*, installation by Ghent architects Bavo Gideon Boie & Matthias Pauwels

Until MAY 25 *Inside Outside*, landscape architecture by Petra Blaisse

Diamond Museum

Koningin Astridplein 13-23; 03.202.48.90
Until JUNE 8 *Diamond Divas*, prestigious collection of diamond jewellery worn by the rich and famous

Fotomuseum

Waalse Kaa 47; 03.242.93.00
Until JUNE 8 *Patrick De Spiegelaere*, retrospective of the late Flemish photographer (1961-2007)
Until JUNE 8 *Face On*, portrait photography
Until JUNE 8 *Provisoria*, multi-media work by Ria Verhaeghe
Until JUNE 22 *West, so far*, photographs by Phil van Duynen

Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten (Royal Museum of Fine Arts)

Leopold De Waelplaats; 03.238.78.09
Until JUNE 15 *Jan Cox: Living One's Art*, paintings by the 20th-century Flemish artist
Until JUNE 29 *Willem Elsschots' Kaas: een beeldroman*, graphic novel adaptation by Dick Matena

MoMu

Nationalestraat 28; 03.470.27.70

Until AUG 17 *Moi, Véronique*, Branquinho TOUte NUe, retrospective of the Belgian designer marking the 10th anniversary of her fashion label

Bruges

Arentshuis

Dijver 16
Until AUG 3 *Three Bruges Artists: Legillon, Verbrugge and Ledoux*, 18th and 19th-century drawings

Groeningemuseum

Dijver 12; 050.44.87.43
Until DEC 31 *Leuven loans*, 15th- and 16th-century paintings and woodcarvings from Leuven's Van der Kelen-Mertens museum

Ghent

Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03
Until JUNE 29 *Kunst Nu: Wilfredo Prieto*, installation by the Cuban artist
Until JULY 6 *Guillaume Bijl*, retrospective of the Flemish artist

Hasselt

Modemuseum

Gasthuisstraat 11; 011.23.96.21
Until AUG 31 *Looks: Mode 1750-1958*, Two-hundred years of fashion history

National Jenever Museum

Witte Nonnenstraat 19; 011.23.98.60
Until AUG 31 *The Orange Bulb*, Alambleur, olfactory installation by Peter De Cupere

Z33

Zuivelmarkt (Begijnhof) 33; 011.29.59.60
Until MAY 25 *Place@Space: (re)shaping everyday life*, installations by Paul Casier, Ryoji Ikeda, Limite Azero, Alice Miceli and others

Machelen-Zulte

Het Roger Raveel museum
Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00
Until JUNE 15 *Witte schaduw (White Shadow)*, drawings by Roger Raveel

Ostend

Modern Art Museum
Romestraat 11; 059.50.81.18
Until AUG 31 *Georges Vantongerloo: Pionier van de moderne beeldhouwkunst (Pioneer of Modern Sculpture)*, retrospective of work by the Flemish artist (1886-1965)

Ypres

In Flanders Fields Museum
Grote Markt 34; 057.23.92.75
Until SEP 7 *Man, Culture, War: Multicultural Aspects of the First World War*, a panorama of the diverse origins of those who fought in Belgium during WWI

Municipal Museum

Ieperleestraat 31; 057.21.83.00
Until JUNE 1 *Twilight of the Gods over Ypres*, the region through the eyes of photographers Léontine, Maurice and Robert Antony (1893-1930)

MY FLANDERS

Anthony Gröger

Anthony Gröger is a cellist with the Kryptos Quartet, one of the most successful new string quartets in Flanders. He talks about children's interest in classical and the stiff competition these days.

You're based in Brussels now, but you're actually from deepest Flanders.

I come from Maasmechelen, near the Dutch border. I came here when I was 15 to study. I did the two last years of high school here, in Kunsthuisaniora, and then I went to the Brussels Conservatory. I did that diploma, and then I went to Maastricht for a higher diploma with [cellist] Mirel Iancovici. Now I teach in Genk, Zaventem and Vilvoorde, so I have a good experience of Brussels and Flanders.

Is there a difference in the approach to music education between Brussels and Flanders?

I've never taught in Brussels, so I don't know about that side of things, but in Flanders, there is one system, everywhere. In practice, it kind of depends on the teachers and the mentality of the school. Unlike other countries, there is no music education in the schools themselves – not for the moment anyway – so the mountain has to come to Mohammed.

Doesn't the fact that children have to actively go to music academies make music education less accessible?

Well, the lessons are inexpensive compared to other countries. It's €60 or €70 per year, and they have individual lessons, *solfège* and other stuff, so I think they're getting good value. But they need to make their way to the academies, or the parents do. I mean, it's education, and if you want educa-

tion you need to go for it; you have to study and get involved.

How do children approach classical music, which is quite a long way from what they're used to hearing in modern society?

Most of the academies have a programme where every year they organise buses that bring children along to a performance where the kids can then try different musical instruments and singing, percussion and so on. Schools need to do that now because there is such a huge number of competing opportunities for children – sports, hobbies, and so on – that involve less studying, less stress.

Is there a natural barrier between children and classical music? Even for grown-ups, classical music has this thing about being old-fashioned, difficult or elitist.

We shouldn't underestimate the interests of children in general – and little children in particular. If you bring this music to them – even really contemporary music – and can explain what it's about, they really find it fun. We need to make more of an effort to bring it to them. And that's really the responsibility of government and politicians, which frankly could be doing a lot better.

Does your quartet work with promoters or do you have to organise your own concerts?

We contact organisers, festivals, cultural centres: at the start of



every year I make like 200 phone calls. I personally call all the people who are responsible for programming in the whole of Flanders. As a quartet starting out, it's difficult to find a balance between promoting yourself and doing the work you actually have to do to keep a quartet going: rehearsing every day for five or six hours.

Do you have to make compromises between perusing your own interests and playing the Top 40 of crowd-pleasers?

In our case, the policy is to promote lesser-known pieces that are really worth hearing, combined with more accessible and well-known pieces. Sometimes we have rather daring programmes: Ars Musica asked us to play work by Giacinto Scelsi, two quartets. Then for the Festival of Flanders we put on an Impressionistic programme which involved not only Ravel but also Szymanovsky, as well as a Belgian premiere of a piece by a Russian composer which wasn't even edited. We did the editing of the scores ourselves. So you have to give some sugar with the medicine,

and most of the time it works.

On your website, you offer à la carte programmes people can put together themselves.

We have a menu, yes. We have a large repertoire. We have like 70 or 80 quartets that we've studied and played. It doesn't mean that we can play them if you ask for it for tomorrow, though. [laughs] And we tend to try to group things a bit: if we have say a programme of contemporary music, we like to try to put the same programme in several different venues. But we are also open to private or corporate hire, of course. People can put their own programme together.

Which part of Flanders is most "quartet-friendly"? Any unexpected cultural oases along the way?

Maasmechelen was a surprise. They have an incredible programme of quartets and chamber music in general; it's amazing, actually. When I was young, there was nothing in Limburg; it was really a kind of desert. But now there are places – Maasmechelen, Genk, Hasselt – that are really quite interested in

chamber music.

Could you regard chamber music as a kind of anteroom to classical music as a whole? It was, after all, made for playing in somebody's living room.

Most people's introduction to serious music, if they didn't grow up with it, is a musical or something light-classical, like an operetta. Chamber music is like a second step towards the more powerful world of symphony orchestras. It can be a bridge to new audiences – though most concerts still are attended by an older audience. For the moment it's kind of difficult because there's such a mass of concerts. Supply is greater than demand. So you need to stand out in some way, through quality or programming. You need to find an angle.

You had the great good luck of being picked up by the VRT, which made a programme about you for the Plankenkoorts series.

A lot of people saw that. It's been on the VRT twice. And in Flanders on digital TV, there's this cultural channel called Exq. They've broadcast it several times. People know who we are now. We've also recorded a CD called *Timeless Romantics with Sibelius' Voces Intimae*, which we recorded for Plankenkoorts, and Webern's *Langsamer Satz (Slow Movement)*, which is post-Romantic actually. People tend not to know that. And there's a work by a contemporary composer, Peter Van Puymbroeck, who composed his second string quartet for us. The CD will be coming out probably in September or October.

Interview by Alan Hope

Online
www.kryptosquartet.be

THE LAST WORD

what they're saying in Flanders

"François was a colourful person, a lover of life. I don't want to see any black, and that's why I'm asking everyone to turn up in white or beige for the funeral."

Marlène Boonen, mother of footballer François Sterchele, who died last week (see p. 6)

"We're still living in a free world, aren't we? If I can buy the iPhone abroad, I can surely use it here!"

Telecoms minister Vincent Van Quickenborne, owner of a cracked iPhone

"Good morning."

Aalst man Frits Minot, aged 77, wins himself €25,000 just by being cheerful

OstendCasino

Het Mooiste Dorp

Kuifeend

Werk

FrieLeysen

SkincareCentre

next week in Flanders Today