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## Ghent is in the house

The East Flanders city hosts the biggest outdoor festival in Europe

**Lisa Bradshaw**

It's a Friday morning, and you've woken up on a patch of grass. You squint in the pale light, get your bearings. Where are you? Oh, in Baudelo Park. Not bad. You flick the grass off your jeans and stand up. Ooooh, steady now.

A smile creeps across your face as you remember the night before. Rock 'n' roll in the Vlaamarkt, pyrotechnics in Sint-Baafsabdij, cocktails at Polé-Polé, jumping up and down to screaming DJs in Sint-Baafsplein, over to the Charlatan to spend the wee hours.

And how did you wind up in Baudelo Park? Who cares? This is 10 days of sheer exuberance, slightly debauched and no time for questions. You head home for a few more hours sleep and a 15.00 breakfast before you do it all over again.

Gentse Feesten is not just a music festival or a theatre festival or a dance party. It's a way of life. The annual event that begins this Saturday isn't in a part of Ghent – it is Ghent. If you live there, you cannot escape it, and if you don't and you visit for the first time, you cannot believe it.

Businesses close down for the week, and city leaders can be found downing beers with the masses in the Duvel Dream Ship. Every square, every park and every

street in the centre – and sometimes beyond – is full of music or theatre or impromptu parties. The Vooruit arts centre hosts 10 Days Off, a huge techno festival. The puppet buskers will swarm the mediaeval Patershol neighbourhood. The Ghent Jazz Festival host world-class artists.

Cafes push their services onto the street. Caravans pull in, daring you to pay €1 to step inside. High wire walkers totter above the crowd. Parades, fireworks, food. Nearly everything is free, and 1.5 million people pay homage.

"I must say, the community deserves a big thank you for its tolerance," smiles Jan Schiettekatte, Ghent's director of festivities. "But that is one of those aspects of Ghent – the authenticity of the city, the feeling of being *from* Ghent. It is unique that you have such support from the local community."

In fact it was the local community that revived the 165-year-old festival after it had fallen into dull disarray. Gentse Feesten has its beginnings in the mid 1800s when Ghent was a major textile producer. The captains of industry, who happened to have a majority in the city council, noted that worker absenteeism in the factories on Mondays was disproportionately high – a product of rich

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Belga



### News

Prime minister Yves Leterme faces his biggest challenge yet in securing a deal that will hold together his shaky coalition. Our political correspondent Anja Otte looks at the minefield he has to negotiate.

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### Arts

Bozar is drawing in a younger crowd this summer with a show of startling images by rock 'n' roll stars. Flemish musician Bent Van Looy talks about his own unsettling work.

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### Active

Planckendael is more than 50 years old, but extensive new developments have turned this Mechelen animal park into a cool, interactive playground for both the residents and the visitors.

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### Court upholds Flemish housing code

Municipalities around Brussels exempt from language tests

**Alan Hope**

The Constitutional Court last week rejected a complaint from the French Community against the Flemish housing code, or *Wooncode* – a set of rules drawn up to govern access to social housing in Flanders. The French-speakers had objected to a clause in the Code which obliges candidates for social housing to speak Dutch, or to show a willingness to learn. According to the ruling, the Code is not a breach of constitutional rights, nor is it in conflict with the free movement of persons guaranteed under the EU treaties.

The obligation to learn Dutch was not inconsistent, the Court said, with a policy of integrating immigrants into the local area. And it was all the less onerous given that language courses are free, and the Code contains no condition requiring a minimum standard to be reached.

However, the Court made it clear that the Code cannot be applied in the so-called "facility communes" around Brussels which, although on Flemish territory, allow certain exceptional rights to French-speakers. The Code in any case contains

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## EDITOR'S NOTES

### 1euromuseum

Most children would die at the thought of visiting 23 museums in two days, but a group of 33 Flemish kids have done just that by bicycle. They took up the challenge to launch a new project that encourages young people to visit museums in Flanders by lowering the entry price to just one €1.

The list includes the acclaimed In Flanders Fields in Ypres, the Fashion Museum in Antwerp and the Groeningemuseum in Bruges. The one disappointment is that no Brussels museum is involved – although Bozar is participating, so kids can take advantage of the deal to take a look at the summer exhibition “It’s Not Only Rock ‘n’ Roll, Baby” (see our article on page 10).

Flemish culture minister Bert Anciaux has set aside a €1 million budget for this project, which includes everyone under the age of 26. His aim is to persuade them to take an interest in the region’s museums by making them cheap and fun to visit. “A museum isn’t a dull, stuffy place,” he said at the launch. “It’s a living place where young people should feel at home and feel part of it.”

Not sure your kids will bite this particular apple? Then get them to take a look at the 1euromuseum website, which was clearly designed by some of the coolest

geeks in Flanders. There are funny YouTube clips to watch and groovy photos of Flemish museums (click on Museum Dr Guislain to see inside one of the country’s most peculiar offerings).

Looking at the programme of events, it seems that museums could well be the hip destinations of the summer. The Fashion Museum, for instance, has drawn up a long list of activities, including summer workshops focusing on the clothes of Véronique Branquinho, while Ghent’s Design Museum has asked local shops to display objects from the 1950s so that kids can follow on a design trail through the streets.

The Gaasbeek Castle in Flemish Brabant, meanwhile, hosts a special exhibition with the intriguing title Divas Don’t Die, while in Genk the Bokrijk Open-Air Museum celebrates its 50th birthday with a feast where you can taste food the way it was made hundreds of years ago.

So when your youngsters go back to school in September, they might surprise their friends by bragging that they went to a museum during the holidays.

**Derek Blyth**

**online**

[www.1euromuseum.be](http://www.1euromuseum.be)



*Crazyssimo*, Andrea Cammarosano’s collection inspired by the periodic table, is showing at the Antwerp Fashion Museum

## Flanders Today

independent newsweekly

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## FACE OF FLANDERS



### Elise Crombez

At 25, Flemish model Elise Crombez has just made her 13th appearance on the cover of *Vogue* magazine, a record for a model of her age. Despite her international travels and astonishing beauty, this small-town girl from Koksijde knows how to keep it real.

When Crombez found out she had set a new *Vogue* record, she was more than a little taken aback. “I was surprised,” said Crombez, who has also modelled for Christian Dior, Chanel, Prada, Armani and has appeared on the covers of *W* and *Elle* magazines. “Growing up, I never thought I’d be on the cover of anything.”

Though aware of her own height and body type, Crombez never considered herself on par with women such as Cindy Crawford, Claudia Schiffer or Kate Moss. Instead, she spent her childhood years aspiring to work in a candy store or bakery “so I could eat anything I wanted”.

Later, she became attracted to acting as a way to evoke emotion in others, an interest which is regularly satisfied through modelling. Asked why she thinks she’s been singled out as a *Vogue* darling, Crombez says, “I think I can look very different and play the character they want for the story. I like to discover my many faces.”

Despite her professional success, the model says that even she doesn’t always like the look of her reflection in the mirror. “Everyone concentrates on what they don’t have and what they want to make better,” she says. Really? Even people who are told multiple times a day how gorgeous they are? Apparently, yes. “[Models] have a harder time letting imperfection take over as they get older,” Crombez reveals. “It’s a shame, because you can’t fight nature. Accepting that you’re getting older will make you age gracefully.”

Of course, worry of wrinkles is still years away for Crombez. Right now, she loves the versatility of her work, the adrenaline of runway shows and the enduring images created during photo shoots. She’s a frequent flyer to Latin America, the United States, Asia, Africa and the far reaches of Europe. Despite endless packing and unpacking and long hours at the airport, she relishes the unknown that waits within each new place or experience.

In between glamorous jet stops, Crombez still makes an effort to visit Koksijde whenever work brings her to Europe. “I wish I could share more with the people that mean a lot in my life,” she says, noting how she often misses the “crazy situations” she, her friends and her brothers often find themselves in when carousing about Belgium.

When not at home, Crombez says she stays grounded by maintaining a good heart and a sense of humour. But no matter how down-to-earth she might be, she confirms that no, hearing how beautiful you are never gets tiring.

**Rebecca Gross**

Crombez’ latest cover was the June issue of Latin American *Vogue*, but the above cover of the same magazine from last autumn is one of our favourites. The bombastic crinkles of Dolce & Gabbana’s metallic design, with a belt teasingly locked at the middle and the choppy, uneven hair adds up to one of the model’s sassiest, most unforgettable looks.

## TALKING DUTCH

### notes on language



### spaarpot

I always thought that the Scots were the masters of saving for a rainy day. Apparently, they now spend their money as if there was no tomorrow, something they’ve no doubt learned from their southern neighbours.

In fact, the best home from home for that dying breed of thrifty Scots is Flanders. No one in Europe saves quite like the Flemish. *Bijna 40 procent van de Vlamingen hebben meer dan 50.000 euro in hun spaarpot, maar één op drie spaart niets* – Almost 40% of the Flemish have more than 50,000 euro in their piggy bank, but one in three saves nothing. Well, more likely they have money in shares than in piggy banks, and that’s why so many people are having sleepless nights these days. The old-fashioned *spaarboekje*, now no longer a book, fell out of fashion in recent years, which is not surprising when the interest rate for savings accounts was barely above 1%.

So the banks came up with a range of products (a strange use of the word) for the frugal Fleming to stash all that money in and watch it grow. Mostly this involved investing in shares on the *beurzen* – the stock markets. Recent events have seen the value of these *beleggingen* – investments – shrivel, and if you had played safe and bought a package with *kapitaalbescherming*, then at least your capital is protected but little else.

Since many are now wondering whether the mattress wouldn’t be a better place for their nest egg, the banks have been trying to reassure their customers. We received such a letter the other day telling us that *de huidige malaise is gelukkig tijdelijk; dit staat buiten kijf* – fortunately, the present malaise is temporary; that is beyond dispute. I was beginning to feel better already. *Geleidelijk zal de rust in de banksector terugkeren* – Gradually calm will return to the banking sector. A wave of relief was flowing over me. *Paniek is altijd een slechte raadgever* – Panic is always a bad adviser. I was positively humming with alpha waves. And these only strengthened when I read of the importance of *het hoofd koel te houden en verder vooruit te kijken* – keeping a cool head and looking to the future.

And then just before the *Aarzel niet om contact te nemen met uw Adviseur bla bla bla* – Do not hesitate to contact your adviser bla bla bla – ending, came this bald statement:

*Periodes, zoals de huidige, blijken achteraf beleggingsopportuniten* – Periods such as the present one later turn out to be investment opportunities. Nothing more, nothing less. What a carrot! And when you dangle a carrot, no words are necessary.

But, then again, not wanting to be an ass, perhaps I should think about making more room under the mattress. Alternatively, I could cash all these products in and go out and blow the lot. No, that would go against the grain. Instead, I’ve committed the sentences above to memory to comfort me in moments of stress. After all, *de huidige malaise is gelukkig tijdelijk*.

**Alistair MacLean**

**online**  
[www.spaargids.be](http://www.spaargids.be)

# FEATURE

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feasting and drinking on Sundays in several villages surrounding Ghent.

In order to curb the hangovers and increase productivity, the city fathers decided to outlaw public fairs, parades and other folk festivals on Sundays. Anticipating discontent, they promised to throw one big party every year where citizens could eat and drink to their hearts' content. They called it Gentse Feesten, or the Festivals of Ghent.

"It was quite an original idea," says Schietekatte. "Ghent has always been a little out of the ordinary."

True to its word, the city hosted the feast every year. But eventually it began to die out, and the city became less and less involved. Though it stubbornly continued, by the mid 1900s Gentse Feesten wasn't much more than a carnival and a few folk singers.

Enter Walter De Buck. The Flemish artist, musician and actor is known throughout the country, but he is a legend in Ghent because he didn't just revive it – he saved the Gentse Feesten. And turned it into the biggest festival of outdoor music and theatre in Europe. It was the 1970s, and De Buck pulled together a talented band of hippies all loosely associated with the counter-culture café Trefpunt. Together they formulated plans for each outdoor square to host a genre of music and to bring street theatre back as a primary focus.

It grew and grew and, finally, the city got involved. Trefpunt still stands at Sint-Jacobs square, one of the hubs of the Feesten. Today a full-fledged social action non-profit committee continues, along with the city, to organise the Gentse Feesten. De Buck, age 74, still performs every year on the Trefpunt stage in Sint-Jacobs.

The festival was recreated during "the protest culture," notes Schietekatte, "and it had social and political dimensions. There is still an important aspect of cultural democracy in the festivities. For one thing, it's free; everyone can go. Trefpunt is still the artistic heart of Gentse Feesten."

Back 150 years ago, the event actually saw a strong division between the working and upper classes. Not so now. One of the joys of Gentse Feesten is how, for 10 days, young people embrace their Flemish roots – somewhat cheekily, perhaps, but still with respect. At Gentse Feesten, folksy is cool.

In Huis van Alijn, for instance, the folk heritage museum, a mixed crowd gathers to sing old Flemish folk songs in dialect. And the biggest concert of the year is inevitably Eddy Wally. The 76-year old, who was born just outside Ghent, is the Flemish Liberace. His flashy rings and bright pink suit will take the stage again this year for "The Eddy Wally Show" in front of a crowd of 10,000 of his biggest fans – the over 60s and the under 35s.

That's 10,000 people crammed into Sint-Baafsplein, which brings up an important point: for those who don't like crowds, you'll enjoy Ghent best in the daylight. After 21.00, the crowd becomes so thick,



you'll be shoulder to shoulder with your brothers and sisters whether you like it or not.

Though there are a number of activities that fall under the Gentse Feesten umbrella, it is at its core a music and street theatre festival. The theatre falls at the final half of the Feesten and this year sports its own name: MiramirO – a combination of the name of famous Catalan painter Joan Miró and the Spanish verb for "to look".

One of Europe's most anticipated street theatre events, MiramirO pulls in the best acts from across the continent. No simple jugglers here – I've seen theatre at Gentse Feesten with props so elaborate and performances so professional, it was difficult to believe I was seeing it for free in a little-used concrete square in my own neighbourhood.

## online

[www.gentsefeesten.be](http://www.gentsefeesten.be)  
[www.miramiro.be](http://www.miramiro.be)

## How it works

The music at Gentse Feesten is arranged by public square: each has its own stage with, roughly, its own theme: folk, world, swing, etc. The big draw – and where everyone goes when they're not sure where to go – is the **Polé Polé festival**. Markets selling Caribbean themed drinks, food and trinkets line both sides of the water between Graslei and Korenlei, and the gigantic domed stage is built right across the canal. Five concerts a day of soul, funk and fusion.

Another hub is **Sint-Baafsplein**, where acts are scheduled when those big, cross-over crowds are expected. Besides **Eddy Wally**, it's where you'll find 1960s band **The Animals** and **Dirk Brossé** leading the Vlaams Radio Orkest. **Baudelo Park**, meanwhile, is the place to chill. A stage full of people learning world dance moves, bohemians in a tent serving fresh mint tea, a stage on the grass for kids' acts and the **spiegeltent**, home to an peculiar mix of world music, bluegrass and the occasional cabaret.

The big talk this year is the absence of **Boomtown**, the alt rock Mecca, where hipsters gather in their own little village of cool aloofness. The organisers are on hiatus, and local music club Democracy is bravely stepping in to fill the gap with pop, rock and punk in a nearby venue under the moniker **BoomBox**. But it's indoors, and they're charging to see the shows. It's not the same, and everybody knows it.

**Street theatre** pops up all over the festival all day long, but the scheduled performances take place in specific parks and squares, generally a short walk from all the noise of the music. Though it's all open air, it's popular, so if there is an act you're keen to see, it's best to show up at least half an hour in advance.

Schedules can be found on the websites, but I highly recommend the **programmes** you can hold it your hand with listings by date and square, plus maps. You can pick up a Gentse Feesten programme in shops around town for €2. MiramirO street theatre programmes are available in the information tent in Emile Braunplein.

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## Both sides claim victory after verdict

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a provision making an exception for these municipalities.

Flemish housing minister Marino Keulen pointed out that the facility commune exemption was of limited importance. Of the 140,000 social houses in Flanders, only 1,600 or so are in the six facility communes, and only 43 of those changed tenants during the whole of 2006. "The entire French political class rose up against the *Wooncode*. They've now been told to back off," he said. "The Court has ruled that the Code does not breach fundamental rights. This should put an end to criticism from French-speakers."

Rudy Demotte, minister-president of the French Community, praised the Court's ruling

on the question of the facility communes. "This will put the minds of French-speakers around Brussels at rest," he said.

The Court did, however, overturn another clause in the Code which was the subject of an objection, this time by the Human Rights League and the VOB – the organisation which represents tenants' interests. That clause concerns the right of the Flemish government's housing agency to cancel rental contracts unilaterally during a probation period. The Court said the clause undermined the basic right to housing. Only a court could decide whether a fault on the part of a tenant was severe enough to warrant the termination of a contract, the Court ruled.

The ruling is expected to clear the way for a decision by the EU Commission, which

received a complaint from the French Community over the *Wooncode*, but reserved judgement until the Belgian Constitutional Court had ruled. "I'm not expecting any surprises," Keulen said.

- Flanders minister-president Kris Peeters stressed the importance of language in his speech marking Flemish National Day on July 11. "The Flemish community should be an open and welcoming community," he said. "But that does not mean that we attach no value to our own language and our own culture. All Flemings have the right to defend their lawful interests, including respect for their language. That is also of great social, human and democratic importance," he said.

## No stomach-stapling on children, say doctors

Flemish doctors have spoken out against the arrival in the Netherlands of stomach reduction surgery for children. Last week a surgeon in Maastricht revealed that he had carried out reduction surgery on a boy aged 11. Dr Jan Willem Greve defended his decision, pointing out that the risks of surgery are less than the risks associated with childhood obesity. In normal circumstances, he said, he would prefer to wait until the patient was 15 or 16, "when the children are physically more or less fully grown".

But one Belgian expert has criticised that view. According to Greet Vansant, professor of nutrition and health at Leuven University, "it is absolutely not true that all young people are fully grown at 16. You could say that for girls, but certainly not for boys," she said. In Belgium, the costs of reduction surgery are not reimbursed for patients who are under the age of 18.

Even that is too young, Vansant said. Surgery should only be an option after every other alternative has been tried. "In my opinion it's



best for that not to happen before about the age of 35 or 40," she said. Stomach reduction can, in fact, lead to arrested growth: eating less leads inevitably to the body taking in less

nourishment. And performing the procedure on young patients can lead to low Vitamin D, a lack of calcium in the bones and problems later in life, for instance during pregnancy.

## Antwerp retirement homes most expensive

The average daily cost of a private place in a retirement home has risen to more than €40, according to figures from the economics ministry. At the same time, the monthly basic bill has gone up to €1,285 (or around €2,000 a month including supplementary costs).

Yet the state pension for former workers now stands at just €956 a month, with income support for other elderly people at €861. "We are worried that more and more old people are putting off moving into retirement homes," said Johan Truyers of the elderly people's organisation Okra. "Especially couples: having one partner in a rest home and one at home has become completely unaffordable."

Meanwhile, for figures, from the Union of Flemish Towns and Municipalities (VVSG) revealed that the daily cost in Antwerp province is highest in the country, at €46.12 on average. That compares to just over €40 in Brussels, Limburg, Brabant and East Flanders, and €39.18 in West Flanders. In Wallonia, meanwhile, prices go from €39.65 in Walloon Brabant to only €32.02 in Namur province. The national average of €37.69 is €2.85 higher than three years ago.

## Improve labour mobility to solve jobs gap, ministers say

Some 72,000 commuters travel every day to Flanders from Brussels and Wallonia for work, but more are needed, ministers from the three regions heard this week as they met in Terhulpen for a cross-border jobs conference.

The meeting was called by Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters and his Walloon counterpart Rudy Demotte, and aimed to help solve the inequalities in the Belgian workforce. While Flanders has thousands of jobs vacancies that force companies to look across the border for workers, Wallonia and Brussels still have relatively high rates of unemployment.

A study last week revealed the not surprising fact that for those seeking work in Flanders, language was the biggest handicap. And language training is one of several measures ministers looked at, as well as the availability of inter-regional public transport serving industrial areas, cooperation between labour agencies and a good exchange of information on vacancies and job-seekers.

Going in the opposite direction, some 22,000 Flemish workers commute daily to Wallonia, and 230,000 to Brussels – most of those from Flemish Brabant. From Wallonia, 126,000 travel daily to Brussels, and 16.7% of all workers living in the region have a job elsewhere – either in one of the other two other regions or abroad in France, Luxembourg or Germany. Only 11.2% of Flemings work outside their own region.

## Music industry asks for help, not quotas

The Belgian media needs to pay more attention to local performers to meet the growing demand from the public for songs in their own language, according to the Belgian Entertainment Association (BEA), in a statement issued last week to mark Flemish national day. However, the BEA said, there is no need to go as far as recently proposed by Flanders' media minister Geert Bourgeois and impose quotas on public radio broadcasters.

In 2007, almost half of the top 100 albums rated by the Ultratop chart were by Flemish artists, and at one point local artists held eight of the top 10 spots. A Belgian song occupied the number one position for 32 weeks in 2007, with one single alone achieving a record-breaking 16 weeks at the top.

Instead of making radio stations play a minimum percentage of Dutch-language songs, the industry is calling on the media to pay more attention to locally-produced music. "Then we could reinforce the identity of our musical landscape," the BEA's statement says. "Record companies that invest in local music productions would once more dare to take a risk on high-quality recordings and support local talent," the organisation says.

## FIFTH COLUMN



### Who's afraid of CD&V?

All eyes have been on the Flemish Christian Democrat party CD&V these past couple of days. If prime minister Yves Leterme had succeeded in forging an agreement between the Flemings and the Francophones, then his own party would have been the first to judge it. Would it live up to the exceptionally high expectations of CD&V? And what if the prime minister did not reach an agreement? Would his party agree to postpone the talks beyond the July 15 deadline?

In either case, his party president, Marianne Thyssen, will be one of the main players. A European MP for many years, she is learning the hard way that Belgian politics can be very nasty. The negotiations have been a real eye-opener for her. Yet she represents her party the way a president is expected to, by sticking to the demands of the past. Inevitably she has already had to confront Yves Leterme, who, as a prime minister, is seeking a compromise.

Then there is Kris Peeters, the Flemish minister-president who is by now considered the number two in CD&V, after Leterme himself. Kris Peeters represents the Flemish government. Actively. Last week, just as the federal government was concluding its budget control, he reminded everyone that the Flemish contribution of €400 million was not unconditional. The Flemish government is only willing to cough up the money if there is an agreement on institutional matters. Leterme brushed this aside as "political games", which led to him being publicly reprimanded by Peeters. Once again, Leterme was clashing with one of his own.

As *Flanders Today* went to press, there was talk of letting the ministers-president – Kris Peeters and his colleague Rudy Demotte – take part in the negotiations. This looks like Leterme turning the tables on Peeters. How firm will he be at the negotiation table?

As if that was not enough, the large CD&V party contains a considerable number of hardliners who have to be convinced by Leterme. They consist of two groups – backbenchers who have lost all hope of ever becoming ministers (and their sense of compromise with it) and eager youngsters, for whom the "Belgian compromise" (which Christian-Democrats have traditionally been very good at) is a thing of the past.

"I am not afraid", Yves Leterme said recently. "I am not afraid of my party."

Why should he be? Every one of the characters mentioned above has been created by Leterme himself. Marianne Thyssen and Kris Peeters are where they are today because Yves Leterme put them there.

The hardliners – young and old – are taking their lead from Leterme's rhetoric preceding the 2007 elections. Even the cartel with N-VA, the small partner that has always said it would reject any postponement, was made by Leterme with his own hands. So yes, Leterme probably has nothing to be afraid of. Unless, of course, the party he created turns out to be Frankenstein's monster.

Anja Otte

Anja Otte is a freelance Flemish journalist whose work regularly appears in *De Standaard*.

# One down, one to go?

## Fortis CEO's resignation may not appease shareholders

The removal of Fortis CEO Jean-Paul Votron from his post was not unexpected. In fact the only unusual aspect of the whole thing was the length of time it took the board, meeting at the request of company chairman Maurice Lippens in the Koningstraat headquarters last Friday, to deal with the matter. Votron's departure was a foregone conclusion: the only thing remaining to be decided was the terms under which he would be persuaded to jump, rather than be pushed.

The appointment of his ad interim replacement cannot have exercised the board's minds for long, either. Herman Verwilst was already number two, but even then, according to reports, he had to be dragged kicking and screaming like a Papal candidate into Votron's chair. And no wonder: the job he will be holding open while a permanent successor is found is a poisoned chalice. The company faces tough times; the share price may have rallied slightly but is still in the tank; and shareholder confidence in the board has never been lower.

Verwilst will not be a welcome replacement to the many small shareholders – and several large ones – who are disgusted at the way they were treated in the run-up to the capital increase carried out at the end of June. Fortis said the capital increase would not include any sort of rights issue which devalued their shares, but the opposite turned out to be true, with €1.5 billion in new shares issued. Fortis said the dividend would not be affected and, again, the opposite was true – the interim dividend was scrapped, and the annual dividend will be paid out in shares instead of cash.

The root problem was the acquisition by Fortis and two other banks of the Dutch giant ABN Amro, which cost Fortis €24 billion. This was money which it didn't have, as it turned out; hence the capital increase –



the second in a year. Those problems led the bank's share-price to tumble by almost 20%, an unprecedented fall. They also led to the defenestration of Votron last week.

But Verwilst has his share of blame to carry. He made his own statements on the rights issue, following the party line. Whether the angry shareholders will be prepared to see him take the top job even on a temporary basis remains to be seen.

On the question of chairman Lippens there seems to be more of a consensus: he must follow Votron to the exit door. Lippens, like the others, squandered his credibility by making statements about the capital increase and dividend which he must, albeit at some late stage, have known to be untrue. What's more, in the aftermath of the share-price

collapse he stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Votron, offering his full confidence in his CEO, whom he described as "a good captain". Perhaps last Friday's meeting went on so long because Lippens' future could not be agreed. His fate now lies in the hands of shareholders, who will make their views known in the days to come.

The exact terms of Votron's parting are not known, but two figures are known. His contract allows for one year of salary on severance, which comes to €1.3 million. And he will certainly be hanging on to the bonus awarded him last year of €2.5 million, which at the time was explained as a reward for his success in seeing through the ABN Amro deal – the same deal that has now cost him his head, and shareholders many millions of euro. **A.H.**

## THE WEEK IN FIGURES

### 19%

The reduction in the amount of energy used over two years by the rail authority NMBS, leading to cost savings of €1.6 million.

### €95 million

The amount reserved by the Flemish government for the region's aerospace businesses to help them finance bids for work related to the development of new Airbus aircraft.

### 3,000

The psychological barrier below which Bel20 share prices dipped last week, for the first time since the beginning of 2005.

### €750 million

The cost to the federal treasury of reducing the VAT charged in restaurants from 21% to 6%. The EU proposal to extend low VAT tariffs is opposed by Germany and Denmark, and would cover food and drink consumed in restaurants, but not alcohol.

### 6,000/ 300/ €615

The number of people who queued up at midnight last Thursday at the Mobistar shop on Guldenvliesslaan to buy the newly-arrived 3G Apple iPhone, the number of phones the shop had available for sale, and the top price the crowds were willing to pay. The much sought-after gadget is already sold out in other outlets as well.

### 83

The number of cyclists caught by Ghent police using their mobile phone while in the saddle. Each received an on-the-spot fine of €100, as did the single motorcyclist caught in the act.

### 2

The number of people authorised to know why a terror alert was issued at the end of last year, disrupting Christmas and New Year shopping and festivities in central Brussels. They are federal prosecutor Johan Delmulle and Jean-Claude Delepierre, director-general of the Organ for the Coordination and Analysis of Threat. Interior minister Patrick Dewael, who cancelled leave for hundreds of extra police, is not allowed to know the reason for the alert.

### 30,000

The number of extras needed by Ben X director Nic Balthazar to take part in the shooting of a Soulwax video clip on Ostend beach on 10 August, in aid of action on climate change.

### 750 / 415

The number of security cameras installed by Flemish transport authority De Lijn in buses, trams and security blackspots; and the number which actually work.

## Top buildings official suspected of corruption

The senior official in the Flemish Brabant buildings agency has been accused of accepting bribes from a group of contractors in exchange for lucrative public building and maintenance contracts. Of the 15 building contractors questioned so far, all have admitted that they provided money, meals, trips and other gifts to officials in return for favours. As well as the senior official (who has not been named), a number of other agency staff have been questioned, the Leuven prosecutor said. The senior official is at present on sickness leave.

The cartel is thought to have operated for at least 10 years. The scale of the bribery is not known, but officials are thought to have taken a "commission" of between 5% and 10% of the contract price. This cost would then have been passed on to the public agency.

According to the agency's spokesman, the officials in question have all been interviewed and moved to other services to await the outcome of the legal action. The contractors concerned, meanwhile, are no longer considered for public contracts. The agency promised it would revise its internal procedures to remove control of projects from the hands of only one person. In addition, staff and candidate contractors alike would be made more aware of the rules on public tenders.

### online

[www.buildingsagency.be](http://www.buildingsagency.be)

## NEWS FLASH



The federal Court of Auditors is to examine the contract signed in 2005 which has so far cost €8.3 million for a **dumping site that cannot be used**. The two clay pits were intended for the dumping of dredging silt from the rivers Scheldt, Dijle, Nete and Rupel, with the rental costing €68 million over 15 years. But, because of the lack of government permits, no waste has yet been dumped, and Flanders region is unable to get out of the contract. The Rekenhof will look into allegations that the civil servant who signed the contract, now deceased, may have been involved in a conflict of interest.

The Flemish government is prepared to go to the Council of State if the federal government does not remove its objections to a planned field-trial of **genetically-modified poplar trees**. The trees, part of a research study by the Flemish Institute for Biotechnology, are intended to be used to produce bio-fuels, and could open up an important new source of bio-ethanol now that the use of food sources like maize has been blamed for rising world food prices. Greenpeace meanwhile welcomed the government's objections, fearing the project could lead to the commercialisation of GMO trees.

A British pilot who spent eight months in Belgian custody on **suspicion of cocaine smuggling** is to write a book about his "disgusting treatment". Steve Jackson, a former military policeman, says he was first told he would be held for a couple of days, but ended up being jailed for eight months despite there being "not one ounce of evidence against me". His co-pilot, also detained, has since disappeared without trace.

The **frietkoten** of Flanders were in panic last week when it was revealed that a batch of Swedish cooking-fat had been **contaminated by bone marrow**, which is banned from the human food-chain because of the risk of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or its human variant Creutzfeld-Jacob's disease. A spokesman for the federal food safety agency said the shipment had been intercepted and recalled.

Half of all reality shows made by Flemish TV include **scenes of smoking**, with VT4 the worst offender, showing an average of three such scenes in every episode, more than in the UK or US. VTM is next, followed by VijfTV, één and 2BE. The single worst offender, however, was the VijfTV series *Tienermoeders* (Teenage Mothers). The prevalence of smoking in reality shows was part of the master's thesis of Antwerp University student Sophie Jacobien.

## Obama butts into beer battle

The struggle between Belgian giant brewer InBev and Anheuser-Busch (AB) took a political turn last week when Democratic Party presidential nominee Barack Obama described InBev's planned acquisition of the St. Louis-based maker of Budweiser as "scandalous". Obama was in the Missouri city campaigning, and took the opportunity to deliver some all-American rhetoric. "We should be able to find an American company that is ready to buy Anheuser-Busch," he suggested. "That is, if the owners want to sell."

Obama's intervention was solidly judged on populist grounds – at least two websites have been set up to defend the honour of AB, with state and local politicians of every persuasion jumping on the bandwagon. But his concerns were undercut almost immediately by an increase in InBev's offer, from \$65 to \$70 per share, and by AB's immediate about-face. As *Flanders Today* went to press, the two sides were already congratulating themselves on a "synergy dividend" which the deal would bring them, worth an estimated \$1.5 billion over the three-year period beginning in 2011.

The deal puts an end to the duelling lawsuits coming out of Leuven and St. Louis. InBev tried to get the courts to allow its original bid to be put directly to shareholders, bypassing the board. AB brought a counter-suit alleging that InBev had misled shareholders regarding its financial position. Now that a price has been agreed, allegations of lying will vanish, and the AB board will be allowed to stay in place – for the time being, at least.

The new company – to be called Anheuser-Busch InBev – will become the world's largest brewing company, producing 460 million hectolitres of beer and generating a turnover of €26.6 billion. AB is already the biggest brewer in the US with just over 48% of the market, and brings InBev a whole new market in which it was hardly present until now.

The deal also wipes the slate clean regarding AB's campaign to point out to shareholders – and also to the American public as a whole – that InBev "has an



important partnership with the Cuban government to produce and distribute its products in Cuba". Trading with Cuba is still illegal in America, but this issue no longer seems to be a problem.

- InBev CEO Carlos Brito has been engaged in a charm offensive of his own, giving an interview to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch in which he assured the AB board that they knew the company better than he could, which is why he is keen to retain them after a takeover. "I know a lot of the top guys, most of them for years," Brito told the paper. "We love them, we respect them, we like what they did with the business and the brand."

He also revealed that he has great plans for Budweiser, the beer he referred to as "America in a bottle". "Look at Coke, look at McDonald's, look at so many American brands that did so well internationally," he said. "We believe Budweiser can be the next one."



Production begins again at the Liefmans brewery in Oudenaarde last week under the new management of Duvel Moortgat. The brewery, which went bankrupt last year before being taken over, took delivery of 50 tonnes of Limburg cherries for the manufacture of their celebrated kriek. The beer-cherries mixture will take a year to ripen in 18 tanks. Just before being bottled, young brown beer is added. But kriek-lovers won't have to wait: 15 tanks are already full of kriek made before the company went bust, which is due to be delivered to bars some time this week.

## BUSINESS FLASH



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### Solvay

Chemicals company Solvay has succeeded in its bid to take over Ghent-based biotech concern Innogenetics, after beating off a counter-bid from US-based Gen-Probe. Solvay raised its offer from €5.75 to €6.50, outbidding Gen-Probe's price of €6.10. The bid values Innogenetics at just over €200 million. Gen-Probe issued a statement withdrawing from the process.

### VW

Just over 18 months after half of the workers at the Volkswagen plant in Vorst were made redundant, some 52% have found a new job, according to L'Echo. A slightly higher percentage living in Flanders has gone back to work, whereas in Brussels the percentage is only 16%. Some ex-VW workers need never work again: those with 25 years service left with redundancy payments of up to €144,000, and a bridging pension equivalent to their leaving salary.

### Enfinity

Ghent-based energy company Enfinity has set up an internet site to cope with the flood of offers from company's who want to have Enfinity solar-panels installed on their premises. The company installs the panels at its own expense, and pays a rental on the use of factory and office roofs. So far they have installed 90,000 square metres of panels – about four times the area of Red Square in Moscow.

### Brussels Airlines

Mobile phone operator Mobistar is considering legal action over a plan by Brussels Airlines to sell the newly-released third-generation iPhone in its online store. The airline was due to begin sales of the iPhone this week, at a price slightly lower than Mobistar's. "Mobistar is the exclusive importer and vendor of the iPhone in this country," a spokesperson said.

### Carrefour

Shares in retail giant Carrefour fell to a record low of €31.5 last week on a disappointing earnings forecast. The largest supermarket chain in Europe announced a fall in earnings for the first half of the year of 3%, with the forecast for the second half of a further drop of 4.4%. Hypermarkets performed particularly badly, falling back 5.1%, while franchised outlets saw an increase in earnings of 2% over the half-year, and 3.9% in the second quarter alone.

### Fortune

Six Belgian companies this year made it into the Fortune 500 listing. Troubled bank-insurance group Fortis comes in at 14, followed by Dexia at 19. KBC, meanwhile, was far behind at 213. Delhaize stands at number 306, followed by brewer InBev (431) and management fund Nationale Portefeuillemaatschappij (470).

### Nuon

Dutch energy provider Nuon is to invest in electricity production in Belgium, and aims to increase the number of customers here from 260,000 to 400,000 by 2012, according to newly-appointed managing director for Belgium Robert Kesteman. Nuon has two wind turbines now in operation in the port of Antwerp, with four more in production. Output is set to rise from 12 megawatts at present to 90 megawatts later, she said.

### Van de Velde

Lingerie manufacturer Van de Velde announced disappointing half-year earnings of €67.6 million, up 0.9% on the previous year but well down on the 3% growth forecast at the AGM in May.

### Kalitta Air

There is "not a single argument" in favour of removing Kalitta Air from a list of EU-approved airlines, according to mobility minister Etienne Schoupe, speaking last week after one of the airline's planes crashed on take-off from Bogota in Colombia, killing two people on the ground. A Kalitta aircraft crashed at Zaventem in May, severely disrupting rail traffic but causing no casualties. Residents' groups have called for the airline to be blacklisted.

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## EXHIBITION

# Feeling fragile

If Gentse Feesten is overwhelming you a bit, one Ghent gallery can put you back on your feet

Photos courtesy of Hoet Bekaert Gallery



**Lisa Bradshaw**

If you find yourself in Ghent over the next couple of weeks for Gentse Feesten, don't hesitate to visit the Hoet Bekaert Gallery's summer project, protectively entitled *Fragile*. The gallery is located right in the middle of the 10-day festival fray on Rodelijvekensstraat in an old Vespa factory, a mix of renovated white cubicle areas with an industrial backspace.

*Fragile* is eclectic to its core: paintings, photography, object art, design and a fresh buffet set out every day by creative Ghent caterers Foodloose. It's the first time the gallery has brought together such diverse concepts – a bit of a risk that partially inspired the show's title. The age of the artists is another. "They are all young artists and still on a search for identity. You can feel it in the show. It's psychologically fragile," says gallery co-owner Jan Hoet Jr (yes, son of world-famous Belgian artist Jan Hoet).

If any artists follow that line, it must be the two Ghent lads who go under the name Edelweiss. Jan Matthys and Mich Van Den Berghe's highly stylised posed photography reflects either a fantastical world of bizarre make-believe or some kind of ancient, sinister Flemish underworld in which captive and captor vie for attention. *Fragile* includes several photos by Edelweiss, which alone would be worth a visit.

Flemish photographer Andy De Decker, meanwhile, focuses on his family, producing poignant candids of everyday private life. His work is at once universal, easily recalling images of our own families, and distant, with everyone living their own secret lives.

Flemish painter Veerle Beckers, who was featured in the celebrated *Canvas Collectie* show this year in Brussels, lends several works to *Fragile*, which emanate a deep sense of vulnerability and marginalisation.

Much of *Fragile* is home-grown work, but the show also features German artist duo Rindfleisch/Rapedius, whose simple display using a ladder and mirror creates a whole new playful image. *Fragile* also includes Belgian/Dutch artist collective Entity Identity's *Beijing Series*, design work created during a one-month stay in China's capital. And Korean shoe designer Choi Jung is on site at the gallery every day through July. Her work is there but, better yet, she'll design a shoe on the spot based on a conversation with you. If you like it, you can order a pair, and she'll make them for you.

Entry to the gallery is free, and so is the buffet. If the weather is fine, you can take it out to the back terrace and sit on tree stumps around a big table. What a nice respite from the noise and clamour of the festival outside.

**online**  
[www.lets.be](http://www.lets.be)



Photos clockwise from top: "Untitled" by Edelweiss; "Klappstern" by Rindfleisch/Rapedius; "Regret" by Veerle Beckers; "Beijing Bubbles" by Gésline Hackenberg; "Untitled" by Andy De Decker

## EXHIBITION

# What lies beneath

Flemish musician Bent Van Looy stands out among the bigger names in Brussels' rock 'n' roll exhibition



Saffina Rana

Bent Van Looy, lead singer of Das Pop, painted his favourite piece of work in the back room of his doctor's surgery in Ghent. It's now hanging in the upper gallery of Bozar's summer exhibition, vying for attention alongside 20 other contemporary and legendary rock artists, the likes of which include David Byrne, Patti Smith, Brian Eno, Yoko Ono, Pete Doherty, Antony and Antony and the Johnsons, plus bands such as Chicks on Speed, Fischer-spooner, The Kills and Riceboy Sleeps.

But Van Looy is not just part of *It's Not Only Rock 'n' Roll Baby!* as the token Belgian, his large square canvases stand up well against the work of some of his better-known contemporaries in the Brussels' exhibition.

Initially, it's the interaction of the characters that draws you closer to his work. But the coarse strokes of the acrylics and muted tones create a palpable tension, and you can't help but imagine a disturbing narrative lurking underneath.

In one canvas, a figure dressed in brightly coloured sportswear and with the head of a white rabbit, waves out to you from some rocks while another looks skywards, holding what seems to be a crudely carved baseball bat. "I didn't make this up," Van Looy tells me. "It was a picture that someone took illegally in North Korea. These animals are three or four metres high, made of wood I imagine, at the beginning of a path in the forest. It's a very sinister reality," he smiles.

Rifling through newspapers and magazines, Van Looy seeks out photographs that move him to paint. "I work with found things in reality," he explains. "I'll find images in newspapers and keep them. It's about sensation. If an image strikes me, it's usually because it looks very attractive but underneath the surface there are horrible things happening." But the clipping is just the source, he explains. "The painting becomes another thing. It becomes a story."

We turn to a canvas on an opposite wall. An ashen-faced boy dressed in shorts stands unsteadily with his arms raised above his head. A headless figure dressed in a tracksuit grips one of his arms. His deep red shorts stand out in stark contrast to his bloodless face. It's the only work that Van Looy has based on an image that someone has given him. "I had to paint it," he tells me. "It's the least subtle of my paintings; the others have the horror underneath." When I ask if he had been through the trauma of school sports, he replies with a nervous laugh: "Oh yeah. Every week."

In contrast, his favourite piece is less obvious. Against a black horizon, a moonlit black figure in period clothing carries a ghostly white mass with the faint outline of a woman across a wash of a cool, slightly luminous pale green. "It's kind of a black lackey that carries a woman across a pond," says Van Looy. "I really like this one. There's a tenderness there."



A boy and his art: Bent Van Looy of Flemish band Das Pop recreates disconcerting images from reality

show Van Looy wholeheartedly enjoys. "I bumped into Brian Eno in the gallery," grins Van Looy. "I said I really liked his stuff, and he said 'Your paintings are the only other stuff I like.'"

As a child, Van Looy says he was either playing the drums and painting or thinking about playing the drums and painting. The band was formed with friends while he was still at high school in Ghent in the 1990s. Now in his early 30s, Van Looy makes a distinction between creating music and painting. "Music in itself is much more physical than painting is," he says. "Music's more fun. When we write songs, in rehearsal we feel the beats physically. It's exciting. Whereas with painting, you really have to sit down in a quiet room and make it all happen by yourself. It's more cerebral."

Listening to the new single "Underground" on the band's website, you'll find a hummable little indie guitar tune full of quirky observations. But, as with Van Looy's painting, start listening to the lyrics a little more closely, and you'll find traces of darker emotions.

online  
[www.daspop.com](http://www.daspop.com)

## Rock the Bozar

*It's Not Only Rock 'n' Roll, Baby!* was put together in the space of five months by French curator Jérôme Sans, one half of the electro-rock duo Liquid Architecture, a founder of the Palais de Tokyo in Paris and currently director of the Ullens Centre for Contemporary Arts in Beijing. In collaboration with Rock Werchter, the expo has been designed to reach out to a wider youth population than the Bozar is normally used to. If you are under 26, you can get in for just €1.

Don't miss Patti Smith's atmospheric gelatin silver prints. A subtle chill of absence emanates from her photographs of an empty bed, an empty road, a white mask and a winding river. It's only at the far end of the wall

that you find out this is Keats' bed in London, Rimbaud's road in Roche, Blake's life mask and the river that Virginia Woolf drowned in. And if you've ever listened to Babyshambles on the radio and imagined Pete Doherty's blood splattered across the wall, here's your chance.

If you just want a small taste of what's going on, it won't cost you anything to catch Yoko Ono's installation of a coffin garden in the main hall.

Until 14 September, Bozar,  
Ravensteinstraat 23, Brussels

online  
[www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)



Blood, sweat and tears: Pete Doherty

Photos: left, Fred van Rijen; middle, www.kajipenman.com; right, Philippe De Gobert

# Animal instincts

Major investments have rejuvenated this imaginative Mechelen park for both beast and human



Monique Philips

**P**lanckendael is, quite simply, a fantastic day out. If you dare. Because once you've visited this exotic haven of green, you'll want to book a flight to see more of the world this park in Mechelen lets you sample.

Zoos look the same all over the world, you might think, but with its 42 hectares, Planckendael feels more like a forest. It provides top-class adventure that children absolutely love. You'll find one of its 1,000 animals or a playground attraction about every 20 meters. Kids run down the crooked paths, rejoice around every corner.

The animal park in Mechelen is also good to parents. Unlike other kid attractions in Flanders, it never feels crowded, and everything is up to scratch: colourful, yet clean and natural. The garden architecture is state of the art and adapted to the different sections of the park.

Each section covers a different continent, and the most visually impressive is Asia. Designed just two years ago, the new restaurant Toepaja is decked out over the water. You can sit inside in a functional space decorated with imported authentic food stalls and road signs or lounge outside under a large wooden pavilion. Colourful rickshaws and long-tailed boats complete the picture around the breathtaking greenhouse.

The Asian greenhouse, like the rest of the park, is kept up through natural means. A specialised firm releases certain insects, for example, to eat excessive plant lice, thus maintaining the precious natural balance. The green factor rules at

Planckendael: Water is recycled, waste is collected in separate bins, energy is drawn from rape seed. An educational factor is present throughout the park, but integrated in a non-obtrusive way. A variety of signs (in four languages) announce facts about animals and nature. So don't be surprised if your child, after a day at Planckendael, starts in at you with "how long do you think a giraffe's tongue is?"

Although aimed at "cool children from 7 to 12", no cost has been spared to make the park attractive to the slightly older among us. Through a series of footbridges you can walk among the treetops and spot a cheetah below. All animals can hide a bit behind green screens or rocks when they don't feel like visitors. But sometimes it seems as if they look upon the sporadic groups of enthusiastic little school kids as waves of entertainment themselves.

Owned and operated by the Royal Society of Animals of Antwerp (KMDA), the same place that runs the Antwerp Zoo, Planckendael prides itself on its fructuous breeding programmes. The results are indeed fast-paced and rewarding. Three healthy Indian lion cubs prowl their patch of the jungle, while a chubby rhino calf hits the shower with its grumpy mum. The public is invited to choose its name, as they did earlier for the two new Koala babies.

Three wrinkled hornbill chicks, meanwhile, hide in their nest. Anytime now their mother will open up the nest from the inside. She's been in there for about 100

days, while the male has been feeding the babies through a little opening.

In contrast to the hornbill's self-chosen confinement, all animals have plenty of room at Planckendael – more than in the Antwerp Zoo, where historic cages and the neighbouring houses define allotments. Planckendael was in fact set up as a zoo-away-from-the-zoo in 1956. Sick animals from Antwerp were sent here to recover.

**T**he fascinating history of both institutions from 1843 to the present can be explored in the KMDA archives, which have just opened to the public. You can pour over the documents, illustrations and photos, based in a renovated port warehouse destined to house all of Antwerp's archives in optimal conditions.

Although the original Planckendael castle is still in use, the whole park is a far cry from the past. Results of recent heavy investments are plain to see, and the trend will continue: Elephants will arrive in 2010. Last month an entire giraffe family of five moved from Antwerp Zoo to Planckendael to overlook a newly landscaped African savannah – which they will eventually share with zebras, antelopes and guinea fowl.

Moving can be traumatic for animals, and certainly these aren't used to the amount of space with which they are suddenly confronted. Contrary to their born-in-the-wild cousins, these giraffes are unfamiliar with a savannah where they can roam freely and be joined by other species. At this point, you can still track the male giraffe's steady back-and-forth footprints in the sand of the

8000 square-metre paddock.

The rest of the family is keeping near their sleeping quarters. From the five-meter-high terrace of the African lodge, delighted visitors come eye-to-eye with the giraffe family. You can also look inside their sleeping compartments, which can be divided up in several ways. This will be hugely beneficial next year when the two pregnant females will deliver.

As is tradition, a project has been set up to take care of the animals' counterparts in the wild, too. Visitors can help fill the coffers for watering holes in Niger that will provide local giraffes and people separate water sources.

The Planckendael savannah, which rang up a bill of €2.5 million for the Flemish Region, aims to offer visitors the total experience of an African game park by putting typical signs and sounds on your way. (When you pass the replica of a gamekeeper's hut at the entrance, have a good look at the old, yellowed news page pinned to the back wall.)

Don't be surprised by storks flying over your head. They're the star symbol of the park and parade around freely. Despite the heavy spring rains causing casualties among the chicks, Planckendael's 39 nests have produced 55 newborns this year. The park's

Centre for Research and Conservation has built up an extensive database on the DNA and flight schedules of these long-legged birds. You don't even have to go to the park to see them. They're a familiar sight along roads and waterways in the area.

Speaking of which, the Mechelen-Leuven canal has its own novelty on offer this summer. Inaugurated in the presence of Flemish Minister of Tourism Geert Bourgeois and Mechelen's mayor Bart Somers, an additional bright yellow pleasure boat will make its way up river right from Mechelen train station to Planckendael.

The Likamboté leaves every 30 minutes every day through August, carrying passengers to the park and back. Adapted for the disabled, the boat costs €5 per person and provides binoculars and djembes (hand drums). What a great way to start and end the adventure.

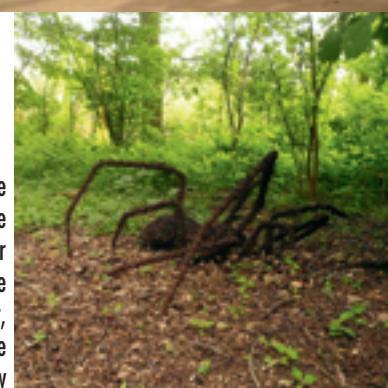
*There are different packages for visit Planckendael, including special combo train passes and a family pass to both the animal park and the zoo in the same year.*

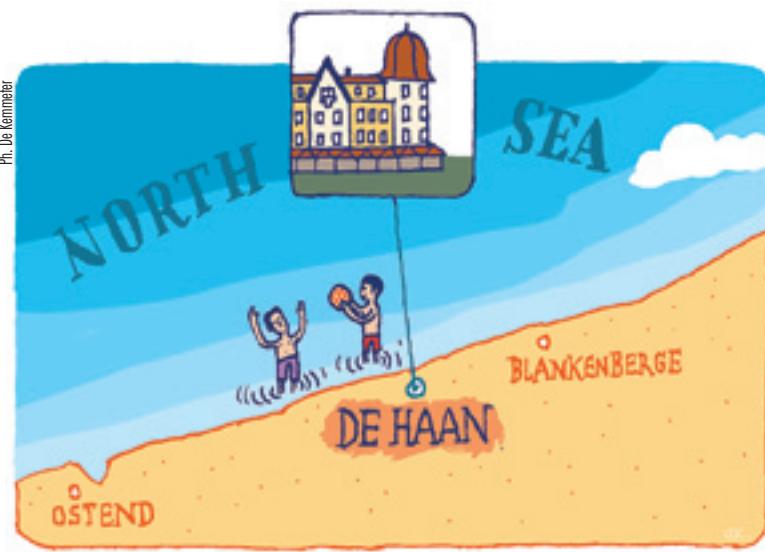
## online

[www.planckendael.be](http://www.planckendael.be)  
[www.felixarchief.be](http://www.felixarchief.be)



Some more natural than others...the giraffes at Planckendael aren't quite ready to mix with other animals, so their hippopotamus is a fake. Above, rope bridges offer a bird's eye view; right, koalas are safe in the trees above, while spider sculptures lurk below





Monique Philips

**D**e Haan and Wenduine make an unlikely pair. Wenduine is a classic family spade-and-bucket resort with a beach flanked by a wall of flats; De Haan is a unique Belle Époque town that won second prize in Flanders' recent Prettiest Village competition. Together they sport 11 kilometres of coastline of which nine are dunes. (That's a record, by the way.)

To get to De Haan, you can travel along the coast from Ostend or Knokke or you can drive inland from Jabbeke, which takes you through water-soaked polders cut up by medieval canals and dykes and lined with lonely, wind-bent trees.

Through this flat and vast *achterland* you'll reach Klemkerke and Vlissegem, two farm villages that were here long before the seaside was a tourist hotspot. If you're

staying in De Haan, they provide perfect scenery to explore by bike: hidden farmsteads that sell fresh goat's milk and ice-cream, wildlife resorts and freshwater fishing ponds. If you're a keen equestrian, there are several riding schools or you and your horse can spend the night at the horse hotel De Kruishoeve. The wall of flats in the distance, so characteristic of the Flemish coast, will show you the way back if you get lost.

Wenduine is one of the best, or worst, examples of the Belgian building fever. The unending row of flats rise like a solid Atlantic Wall – except for one small and older edifice, Villa Malvina. Its shadowy promenade is particularly narrow, and tiny terraces have been squeezed between the steady flow of walkers and go-carts. There is a restaurant, but two rows of beach cabins block your sea view. Still, there are cabins to put your

spades in before you happily dash into the waves. Once on the beach, everyone's happy.

Wenduine, indeed, has a particularly nice beach. Nowhere on the coast does woodland come so near the sea. These unique Duinbossen forests have dry sandy parts, as well as moist patches with rare vegetation such as the Seaside Pansy (*Viola curtisii*) and the poisonous Cypress Spurge (*Euphorbia cyprissias*). On the other side of De



## Things to do

When your children tire of the beach, you can take them to **De Sierk** on the Vosseslag in De Haan, a great new alternative to regular theme parks. This playground revolves around a circus tent and kids can practice on monocycles and trapezes, play music and drive go-carts. Toddlers are welcome, too, as Sierk's owners are kindergarten teachers. **Subtropical Aquapark** in Wenduinsteenweg, meanwhile, has it all, plus a waterfall.

For adults, Rita Vanhalst's **Antiekkliniiek** on Batterijstraat lets you have a look at how they patiently restore old furniture, bringing it back to life.

**Cinema Rio**, Flanders' smallest cinema, reopens its 1940s doors at the end of July after under-

going renovation for nearly three years at its location on Monicastraat. From the balcony or from below, you can watch the curtain rise the old fashioned way for just €5.

In Wenduine, the **Parfum-o-theek** on Mostreystraat houses a collection of scent bottles and powder boxes from the 18th century onwards. This season's temporary exhibition is *Fauna and Flora*. In the attached bed and breakfast, you can sleep in rooms named Bergamot or Kaneel (cinnamon) and enjoy an aromatic breakfast of homemade jams.

If you like exploring abandoned buildings, check out, at your own risk, the former residence **Ter Zee**

on Ringlaan in Wenduine. The building and chapel were erected in typical yellowish seaside stone.

Back in civilisation, swimming pool **Wielingenbad** is right at the end of the Wenduine promenade. Its terrace is surrounded by dunes, and the building is topped by the Spioenkop, a red-roofed vista point.

Coastal towns keep visitors entertained all summer with fireworks, concerts, markets and festivals. Highlights are De Haan's **Trammelant Festival** when marketers and musicians dress up in Belle Époque style on 2 August, and the Wenduine's **Giants' Parade** on 19 July, which delights young and old.

## Marva is a sweet orange

**D**uring those famously long, hot summers of the 1970s, Marva was one of Flanders' hippest young stars and effortlessly touched people's hearts with her renowned "silky voice". Her broad fan base followed her everywhere dressed up in Marva stockings and munching on Marva oranges. She must have been the first to commercialise her name.

Born in Vlissegem outside De Haan, Marva's legacy still lives on. A bit down the coast in Middelkerke, you'll find camping sites Marva 1, Marva 2 and Marva 3. And in the award-winning 2000 Flemish movie *Iedereen beroemd!* (*Everybody's Famous!*), an ambitious father names his daughter Marva, hoping she'll have an equally successful singing career.

No less than 1,200 guests were present to celebrate the singer's 65th birthday in Vlissegem last month. Local alderman for culture Wilfried Vandaele publicly defended the Flemish song: "Some might say that they are rubbish, but I tell you: English and French lyrics are even bigger rubbish."

Marva, who since 1996 has declined every offer to appear in the media, performed one more time for the occasion, and her musical colleagues agreed: "She is still the only Diva of the Flemish song."

In De Haan's Canticleer Library in Grottestraat, you can have a look at an exhibition of Marva memorabilia until 14 August. You might even want to buy her biography *Marva onvergetelijk* and reminisce about the good old days of mini-skirts and Technicolor photos. Marva herself will be on hand to sign the book on 2 August from 14:00 to 17:00.



Images from a past life: De Haan's Trammelant Festival is this weekend

Haan, towards Bredene, another four kilometres of dunes shelter unique grasses. Winged visitors include linnets, willow warblers, sparrow hawks and nightingales.

This part of the coast has remained an unspoiled and unbroken dune belt for a long time. De Haan was dreamed up by a landscape architect by request of King Leopold II who wanted to create the perfect surroundings for the favourite pastime of Belle Époque upper classes: parades. When a tram connected the existing beach resorts Ostend and Blankenberge, it paved the way for royal builders Joseph Stubbe from Germany and Londoner William Kidner to create their model turn-of-the-century dune town.

The original tin tram station, locally known as *de blekken statie*, was replaced by the listed centrepiece and now tourist office, and the whole city was uniformly erected in the Anglo-Normandy cottage style – white villas with red roofs, decorated balconies and facades. The villas would take up a third of the plot, and the rest was reserved for local vegetation. Designed to preserve the dunes, the maze of little avenues resulted in a perfect fusion between sea and countryside.

Technically, De Haan was carved into lots with a central 2.2 hectare park called La Potinière (the

chatterbox), with tennis courts, pétanque, bowls fields and a mini-golf course. Villas were sold to private individuals, following very strict guidelines with the resulting architectural uniformity and the lack of high-rises on the promenade.

Many villas were once fancy hotels. Dancing halls were all the rage during the roaring inter-war years, and the Atlanta Hotel had one in its rotunda. The city hall, now a grey sad affair, was once the Grand Hôtel du Coq-sur-Mer. This favourite had two dance halls, several pool rooms, running hot water, an elevator and an Alsatian bakery to provide fresh bread daily. A special carriage service drove the hotel's distinguished guests at the nearby Royal Golf Club, which opened in 1903. This 18-hole course remains a challenge with its strong sea winds.

Albert Einstein took refuge in a modest villa at Shakespearelaan 5, the Savoyarde, for six months in 1933 when, after a trip to America, friends advised him not to go back to Nazi Germany. He never did and, reunited here with his wife, he took a boat to Britain and later on back to the US.

These days, De Haan's high housing prices attract mostly German buyers, but day trippers still love to saunter along the Leopoldlaan, the main drag, while the short seaside

promenade and the breakwater-free beach are a playground for children and their grandparents. Water sports club De Windhaan can provide kite surfing equipment. And you don't even have to leave the beach for a snack – traditionally, students in white roam the beach selling Boules de Berlin (French doughnuts sprinkled with sugar).

It may not be paradise, but it's close.

online  
[www.dehaan.be](http://www.dehaan.be)

## The Zeepreventorium

Driving southwest towards Bredene you'll see a massive building on your right facing the sea. Built in 1923 by the Solvay family, this large complex is the temporary home to children and young adults with chronic diseases, such as tuberculosis, asthma, allergies, diabetes and eating disorders. The main goal is to teach patients and their families how to better live with their illnesses.

During the 1950s, the internationally renowned Dr Fernand Alexander was a firm believer in sports, and he made the children wear shorts all year round (except for the year that part of the sea froze over in 1969). Dr Alexander made the institution financially viable by inviting known French singers to perform in its Triton hall. However, his wayward leadership ended in suicide on the premises in 1980. Today, the complex includes both Dutch- and French-speaking primary and secondary schools and a social studies college, which provides interns and personnel.

## Where to sleep

Contrary to what you might think, there aren't that many hotels on the Belgian coast with frontal (be sure to ask) sea views. De Haan and Wenduine have three in total. Wenduine's **Hotel Les Mouettes** squeezed in a tired block of flats has been pampering its guests for 60 years. A double room for the night costs €84, breakfast included.

De Haan's **Auberge des Rois** boasts four stars, regardless of its weathered façade. To sleep in one of its super comfy double rooms you'll pay double: €85 per person per night. (Breakfast costs €10). The best of the three is **Strandhotel** on a corner of De Haan's short Zeedijk. Their good-sized rooms are clean and cosy enough to attract many British guests. €85 to €90 per double room, breakfast included.

If you don't care all that much for putting your feet up on a sunny windowsill to enjoy the sunset, there are many other hotels and B&Bs of all price ranges, and the tourist office website lists them all.

## Where to eat

De Haan has plenty of good restaurants of all levels and price ranges. Hotel and bistro **Mano** celebrates its 30th year at Zeedijk 18 (which is about 300 in seashore catering years).

If you like it a bit rougher, try **De Torre**. Tucked away around the tram station on Memlinglaan, its snacks are yummy and include lots of greenies and fresh fruit. Its jenever stock is locally much appreciated during those winter gales. In the evening the place turns into a den of youth.

The two little kiosks at the main square once shouldered the entrance to a casino and sold cigars. Now they are historically listed and sell crispy *frietjes*. Right next to them is the elegant Grand Hotel Belle Vue with its porch where, amongst other high society, Einstein used to enjoy his afternoon tea.

Enjoy tea in the footsteps of Einstein at Grand Hotel Belle Vue



**Classical & new Music****Brussels**

**Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)**  
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,  
www.bozar.be  
**JULY 20** 20.00 Belgian National  
Orchestra conducted by Roberto  
Minczuk, with Yossif Ivanov, violin;  
Isabelle Druet, mezzo: Glinka, Rossini,  
Mozart, Chausson, Ravel, Mussorgsky  
(concert for Belgium's National Day on  
July 21)

**Flagey**  
Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20,  
www.flagey.be  
**JULY 24** 20.00 Oxalys with Laure  
Delcampe, soprano: Mahler's  
Symphony No 4, Schönberg's Lieder op  
8 (live CD recording)

**Royal Music Conservatory**  
Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37  
**JULY 22** 20.00 The Halle Youth  
Orchestra conducted by Rory  
Macdonald: Copland, Dvorak, Elgar

**Saint Michael and St Gudula  
Cathedral**  
Sint-Goedeleplein; 02.217.83.45  
**JULY 21** 17.30 Jozef Sluys, organ  
**JULY 22** 20.00 Rupert Gottfried  
Frieberger, organ; Elisabeth Hirsch,  
oboe

**Get your tickets now for...****Aldo Ciccolini**

**29 August**  
Bozar, Ravensteinstraat  
23, Brussels. Tickets from  
02.507.82.00 or [www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be).

Not many pianists these days can pride themselves on having played with Wilhelm Furtwängler, accompanied Elisabeth Schwarzkopf or shaken hands with fellow pianist Arthur Schnabel. Neapolitan-born Ciccolini has done all that and, at 83, shows no sign of wanting to retire. Revered in France, his adopted home of nearly 40 years, he's hardly ever heard on this side of the border, so this recital – the opening shot of this year's Klarafestival, the star-packed Brussels leg of the Festival of Flanders – will be teeming with piano buffs hanging on his every note. The programme strictly revolves around Schumann and presents the *Fantasiestücke* Opus 111, the *Carnival Scenes from Vienna*, the monumental third Sonata, aka *Concerto Without Orchestra*, and one of classical music's most famous and poignant odes to youth, the *Scenes from Childhood*.

**Bruges**

**Concertgebouw**  
't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02  
**JULY 18** 20.00 Eglise Guttierrez,  
soprano with the Charlemagne  
Orchestra conducted by Bartholomeus-  
Henri Van de Velde.  
**JULY 19** 15.00 Elardo International  
Opera Competition finalists concert  
with Charlemagne Orchestra  
conducted by Bartholomeus-Henri Van  
de Velde.

**Sint-Salvatorskathedraal**  
Hoek Steenstraat; [www.sintsalvator.be](http://www.sintsalvator.be)  
**JULY 18** 20.30 Organ recital by Michael  
Eckerle from Pforzheim

**Leuven**

**30CC-Wagehuys**  
Brusselsestraat 63, [www.30CC.be](http://www.30CC.be)  
Concerts at 12.15:  
**JULY 17** Take Four Guitar: Tsjaikovski,  
Sjostakovich, Komitas, Khatchaturian  
**JULY 18** Agnès Peytour, harp: Gabriel  
Fauré, Impromptu, Une châtelaine en  
sa tour, Elias Parish-Alvars, Sérénade,  
Félix-Dieudonné Godefroid, Danse des  
sylphes  
**JULY 24** Valérie Vervoort, soprano;  
Eliot Lawson, viola; Jill Lawson, piano;  
Saint-Saens, Massenet, Offenbach,  
Tosti, Lieder

**Sint-Pieterskerk**

Grote Markt  
Concerts at 12.15:  
**JULY 16** Benjamin Alard: Johann  
Sebastian Bach  
**JULY 22** Flamencolega: Flamenco  
**JULY 23** François Deppe, cello;  
Kimiko Nishi, pianoforte: Ludwig van  
Beethoven, twelve variations of "Die  
Zauberflöte" by Mozart, op.66  
Sonate nr.2 for cello and piano, op.5  
nr.2

**Jazz & blues****Brussels**

**Bizon**  
Karpelbrug 7; 02-502.46.99,  
[www.cafebizon.com](http://www.cafebizon.com)  
**JULY 21** 21.30 Bizon Blues Jam Session  
hosted by Roman

**The Music Village**  
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45  
Concerts at 20.30:  
**Until JULY 19** Alexandre Tripodi  
Gypsy Quartet  
**JULY 21-26** 20.45 Vincent Mardens  
Quartet

**Antwerp**

**Cafe Mambo**  
Vlasmarkt 3  
**Wednesdays until AUG 27** 21.00  
Marcelo Moncada Quartet

**Ghent**

**Lazy River Jazz Club**  
Stadhuissteeg 5; 09.230.41.39,  
[www.lazyriverjazzclubgent.be](http://www.lazyriverjazzclubgent.be)  
**JULY 20** 20.30 Boogie Phil & The  
Boogie Woogie Band

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

**L'Alphabet**  
Waversesteenweg 1387; 02.662.23.00  
**JULY 18** 20.00 Stignoise Soundsystem  
+ Les Bicyclettes Blanches + Born Bad  
Label Night: Cheveu + Frustration +  
The Magnetix + DJs Jbwizzzz, Hell\*Zo,  
Stel-R  
**JULY 19** 20.30 The Never Greens

**Deurne**

**Openluchttheater Rivierenhof**  
Turnhoutsebaan 232; 070.222.192,  
[www.openluchttheater.be](http://www.openluchttheater.be)  
Concerts at 20.30:  
**JULY 19** Sweet Coffee **JULY 20**  
Dustin O'Halloran + kd lang **JULY 21**  
Al Jarreau **JULY 24** FrancoisD + Jo  
Lemaire

**Ghent**

**Charlatan**  
Vlasmarkt 6; 09.224.24.57  
**JULY 20** 21.00 Lady Linn & Her  
Magnificent Seven + Selah Sue

**Hotsy Totsy**

Hoogstraat 1; 09.224.20.12,  
[www.hotsytotsy.be](http://www.hotsytotsy.be)  
Concerts at 23.00:  
**JULY 19** Bulsjivism with Bruno  
Deneckere  
**JULY 20** Bulsjivism

**Muziek & Theatercafé Trepunt**

Bijj Sint-Jacobs 18, [www.trepuntvzw.be](http://www.trepuntvzw.be)  
**JULY 19** 20.00 Jah Generation, Feniks  
Taiko, Raymond Van Het Groenewoud

**World, folk**

**Art Base**  
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20  
**JULY 20** 19.30 Bert Cornelis and  
Sandip Banerjee, classical Indian music

**Visual arts****Brussels**

**Arts en Marge**  
Hoogstraat 312; 02.511.04.11  
**Until JULY 26** Overvloed (Abundance),  
outsider art show with work by Carol  
Bailly, Analecto Borgui and Marcel  
Hecquet

**Atomium**

Atomium Square; 02.475.47.72,  
[www.atomium.be](http://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 Roeck'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 on World Fairs (near  
the Atomium on Louis Steensplein)

**Belgian Comic Strip Centre**

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80,  
[www.stripmuseum.be](http://www.stripmuseum.be)  
**Until NOV 16** Smurf for All, All  
for Smurf, original drawings and  
documents celebrating the famous  
characters created 50 years ago by  
Belgian comic strip artist Pierre  
Culliford, known as Peyo

**Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)**

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,  
[www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)  
**Until AUG 8** Sony World Photography  
Awards, a selection from 70,000  
photographs from 178 countries (part  
of the Summer of Photography)  
**Until AUG 24** Architecture in the  
Pictures/Flanders Architectural  
Yearbook, photographs of 37 projects  
offering an overview of architectural  
developments in Flanders in 2006 and  
2007

**Until SEP 14** It's Not Only Rock 'n'  
Roll, Baby!, art works by musicians,  
including Alan Vega, Brian Eno, Laurie  
Anderson, Patti Smith, Pete Doherty  
and Yoko Ono

**Until SEP 21** Sioux in Paradise,  
sculptures, installations, video, models  
and drawings by Johan Muyle

**Until SEP 21** Mapas abiertos/Opening  
maps, overview of contemporary  
Caribbean, Central and South-  
American photography (part of the  
Summer of Photography)

**CIVA**

Kluisstraat 55; 02.642.24.71,  
[www.civa.be](http://www.civa.be)

**Until SEP 19** Documents on the  
gardens designed by René Pechère and  
Jacques Boulanger-François for Expo 58

**Costume and Lace Museum**

Violettestraat 12; 02.213.44.50  
**Until SEP 30** Profiel, textile creations  
by Isabelle Marquet

**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 Elektriciteitscentrale European  
Centre for Contemporary Art**

Sint-Katelijneplein 44; 02.279.64.31  
**Until SEP 28** Fables, photographs by  
Karen Knorr

**De Loge Architectuur museum**

Kluisstraat 86; 02.649.86.65  
**Until SEP 28** Belgique/Belgique 58,  
architectural and decorative forms at  
the time of Belgium's 1958 World's Fair,  
with drawings, photographs, models,  
posters and furniture

**Design Flanders**

Kanselarijstraat 19; 02.227.60.60  
**Until AUG 17** De Nieuwe Oogst (The  
New Harvest), contemporary Flemish  
design

**Espace Photographique Contretype**

Verbindingslaan 1; 02.538.42.20  
**Until SEP 21** Voyage Out, photographs  
by Chantal Maes

**Fondation pour l'Architecture**

Kluisstraat 55; 02.642.24.80,  
[www.fondationpourlarchitecture.be](http://www.fondationpourlarchitecture.be)  
**Until AUG 17** Gevers Design:  
Inventaris van een uitvinder (Inventory  
of an inventor), retrospective of work  
by Belgian designer Christophe Gevers  
(1928-2007)

**Goethe Institute**

Belliardstraat 54; 02.230.77.25  
**Until SEP 12** (closed JULY 21-AUG  
15) Works by German photographers  
Kathrin Ahlt and Felix Dobbert (part of  
the Summer of Photography)

**ING Cultural Centre**

Koningsplein 6; 02.547.22.92  
**Until AUG 21** 21st Century Portraiture  
and Landscape, recent work by 15  
contemporary French photographers

**ISELP**

Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70  
**Until AUG 16** N'oublie pas (Do Not  
Forget), drawings by Virginie de  
Limbourg  
**Until AUG 16** Ceramics by Pilar  
Zurimendi

**Jacques Franck Cultural Centre**

Waterloosesteenweg 94; 02.538.90.20  
**Until AUG 24** Mer: agitée à peu agitée,  
photographs by Jacques Debacker (part  
of the Summer of Photography)

**Jewish Museum of Belgium**

Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63  
**Until OCT 5** One Family, photographs  
by Vardi Kahana

**La Maison de la Bande Dessinée**

Keizerinlaan 1; 02.502.94.68  
**Until SEP 7** Over 150 original drawings  
published in the Belgian weekly Spirou  
(founded in 1938), by Jijé, Franquin,  
Morris, Will, Tillieux, Peyo and Roba,  
among others

**Le Botanique**

Koningstraat 236; 02.218.37.32  
**Until AUG 24** Les enfants d'Abraham  
(Abraham's children), photographs  
on Christians, Muslims and Jews by  
Magnum photographer Abbas (part of  
the Summer of Photography)

**Museum van Elsene**

Jean Van Volsemstraat 71; 02.515.64.22  
**Until AUG 31** The Belle Epoque,  
sculpture by Alexandre Charpentier  
and the museum's collection of posters  
by Toulouse-Lautrec, among other fin-  
de-siècle works

**Rodolphe Janssen Gallery**

Livornostraat 35; 02.538.08.18  
**Until JULY 19** Famous Aliens of  
Filmland, American folk furniture  
origines by Justin Lieberman

**Royal Army Museum**

Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33  
**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 23** Eugène Ysaÿe, exhibition  
on the Belgian violinist and composer,  
with photographs, letters and  
instruments  
**Until AUG 24** In de ban van boeken  
(Under the Spell of Books), Belgian  
book collectors, 1750 to 1850

**Royal Museum of Art and History**

Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11  
**Until SEP 30** België op opticaprenten,  
some 400 views of Belgian cities dating  
from the 17th and 18th centuries

**Until SEP 14** Jeanne d'Arc, the Myth  
and the Image, visual representation  
of Joan of Arc in France from the  
early days of photography (part of the  
Summer of Photography)  
**Until SEP 14** Vudoptik, young  
photographers' views of their favourite  
Brussels' monument (part of the  
Summer of Photography)  
**Until SEP 21** Expo '58 through the lens  
of Gérard Castello-Lopes, photographs  
of the World's Fair (part of the Summer<br

retrospective of work by the French photographer (1928-1991), famous for his contributions to fashion and advertising (part of the Summer of Photography)  
**Until SEP 14** Summertime, photographs by Verne

**Middelheim Museum**  
 Middelheimlaan 6; 03.827.15.34  
**Until AUG 17** Open-air installations by Leo Copers

**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

**Deurle**  
**Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens**  
 Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23  
**Until SEP 21** The Joy of Looking, painting biennale with works by Philip Akkerman, Georg Baselitz, Jean Brusselmans, Francis Picabia and Roger Raveel, among others (see also Roger Raveel Museum in Machelen-Zulte)

**Ghent**  
**Caermersklooster**  
 Vrouwebroersstraat 6; 09.269.29.10  
**Until SEP 14** Disappearing Worlds, photographs of indigenous peoples in Australia, New Guinea and South Africa by Danish anthropologist Jens Bjerre  
**Until SEP 14** Eighty-four, in pek op papier, large format drawings by Richard Simoens

**Design Museum**  
 Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99  
**Until OCT 12** Design from the 1950s and 1960s  
**Until OCT 12** Design with a smile, designs with a surrealist touch  
**Until OCT 12** Hommage to Hans Wegner, exhibition in recognition of the contributions of the famous Danish designer  
**Until OCT 12** Helena Schepens: Perpetuum Mobile, designs by the Flemish silver- and goldsmith

**Dr Guislain Museum**  
 Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95, www.museumdrguislain.be  
**Until SEP 7** Circus or Science: The Roca Collection, anatomical wax models from the late 19th and early 20th centuries  
**Until SEP 7** Jean Rustin, retrospective of work by the French painter  
**Until SEP 7** I live in the painting, work by the late Flemish artist Marc Maet

**Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK)**  
 Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03, www.smak.be  
**Until JULY 27** Hors de soi (Outside oneself), installations by Benoît Félix  
**JULY 19-SEP 21** Electrified, installations combining visual, sound and electronic arts, by Ronald Kuivila and Edwin van der Heide

**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 Flemish artist Peter De Cupere

**Z33**  
 Zuivelmarkt (Beguinage) 33; 011.29.59.60  
**Until AUG 17** Bridge, installation by Michael Cross  
**Until SEP 29** 1% Water, art and design relating to global water issues

**Kemzeke**  
**Verbeke Foundation, Westakker**  
 Hulsterstraat Noord; www.verbekefoundation.com  
**Until NOV 16** Vision in Motion – Motion in Vision, new exhibition of moving art

**Machelen-Zulte**  
**Het Roger Raveelmuseum**  
 Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00  
**Until SEP 21** The Joy of Looking, painting biennale with works by Georg Baselitz, Jean Dubuffet, Asger Jorn, Constant Permeke, Robert Rauschenberg and Roger Raveel, among others (see also Dhondt-Dhaenens Museum in Deurle)

**Mechelen**  
**Congres en Erfgoedcentrum Lamot**  
 Van Beethovenstraat 8-10; 015.29.49.00  
**Until SEP 14** Van Pijl tot paviljoen, 20 models of the pavilions at Brussels' 1958 World's Fair

**Cultuurcentrum**  
 Minderbroedersgang 5; 015.29.40.00, www.cultuurcentrummechelen.be  
**Until SEP 14** Happy Days, collector's items and music of the 1950s recreating the atmosphere of Brussels' 1958 World's Fair

**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  
**Until NOV 12** Off the record, work by artist-in-residence Wendy Morris

## Festivals & special events

**Belgium Roller Parade**  
**Until SEP 29** Weekly rollerskating parades in Brussels and other towns www.belgiumrollers.com

**Summer of Photography:** Contemporary photography festival  
**Until SEP 14** in venues across Belgium 02.507.82.00, www.summerofphotography.be

**Brussels**  
**2nd African Contemporary Art Fair:** Works by 40 African artists based in Africa, Europe and the US  
**UNTIL JULY 20** at Pierre Bergé & Associés, Grote Zavel 40 0478.71.62.96, www.phillipe-lichtfus.com

**Belgium's National Day:** Belgium celebrates its National Day with activities across the country  
**JULY 21** 10.00-midnight In Brussels the festivities start at 10.00 at Saint Michael and St Gudula Cathedral and continue with the annual parade at 15.30 at Paleizenplein. Concerts, street theatre and other entertainment in the city centre. Some public institutions and museums will be open. Fireworks from 23.00, Paleizenplein 02.511.90.00, www.sibp.be or www.opt.be

**Brussels Beach:** Beach on the banks of the canal, with sand, palm trees, deckchairs for hire, beach sports and entertainment for all the family  
**JULY 18-AUG 17** at Sainctelettesquare 02.279.50.49, www.bruxelleslesbains.be

**Ca rebondit sur cour Festival:** Festival of string and Baroque ranging from world and jazz to French chanson, classical and traditional, all on the theme of water  
**Until AUG 30** at Domaine de Rouge-Cloître, Auderghem 02.223.46.75, www.atelierdolcevita.be

**Ecran Total Festival:** Film festival showing a wide variety of films, including classics, reprises, documentaries, Japanese Nouvelle Vague and animation  
**Until SEP 9** at Cinema Arenberg, Koninginnegalerij 26 02.512.80.63, www.arenberg.be

**Midi Fun Fair:** Annual fair stretching from Hallepoort to the end of Zuidlaan  
**JULY 19-AUG 24**; 02.279.25.31, www.fete-foraine.be

**Midis/Minimes 08:** Series of weekday lunchtime concerts, exploring classical and new music rarely performed and new Belgian and international artists  
**Until AUG 29** 12.15 at Kapel van de Miniemens, Miniemensstraat 62, and the Royal Music Conservatory, Regentschapsstraat 30 02.512.30.79, www.midis-minimes.be

**Mini-Europe by Night:** Sound and light show with fireworks  
**JULY 19-AUG 16** at Mini-Europe, Bruparck, at the foot of the Atomium www.minieuropa.com

**National Ball:** The sixth edition of the Bal National includes music by Eddy Wally and François Vincent with a tribute to Claude François, majorettes Les Mignonettes, DJ Intermezzo and Soul City Band. Free entrance  
**JULY 20** 19.30 at Vossenplein, www.balnational.be

**Antwerp**  
**Antwerp on Wheels:** Roller parade through the streets of Antwerp. Warm-up, skating lessons and entertainment from 18.30  
**Monthly until SEP 6** 20.00 starting from Dageraadplaats in Zurenborg 0498.44.11.81, info@antwerponwheels.be

**Zomer van Antwerpen (Summer of Antwerp):** arts festival including avant-garde theatre, concerts in neighbourhood squares, circus performances, outdoor film screenings and a live 'sunset' show every night  
**JULY-AUG** in venues and public spaces across the city 03.224.85.28, www.zomervanantwerpen.be

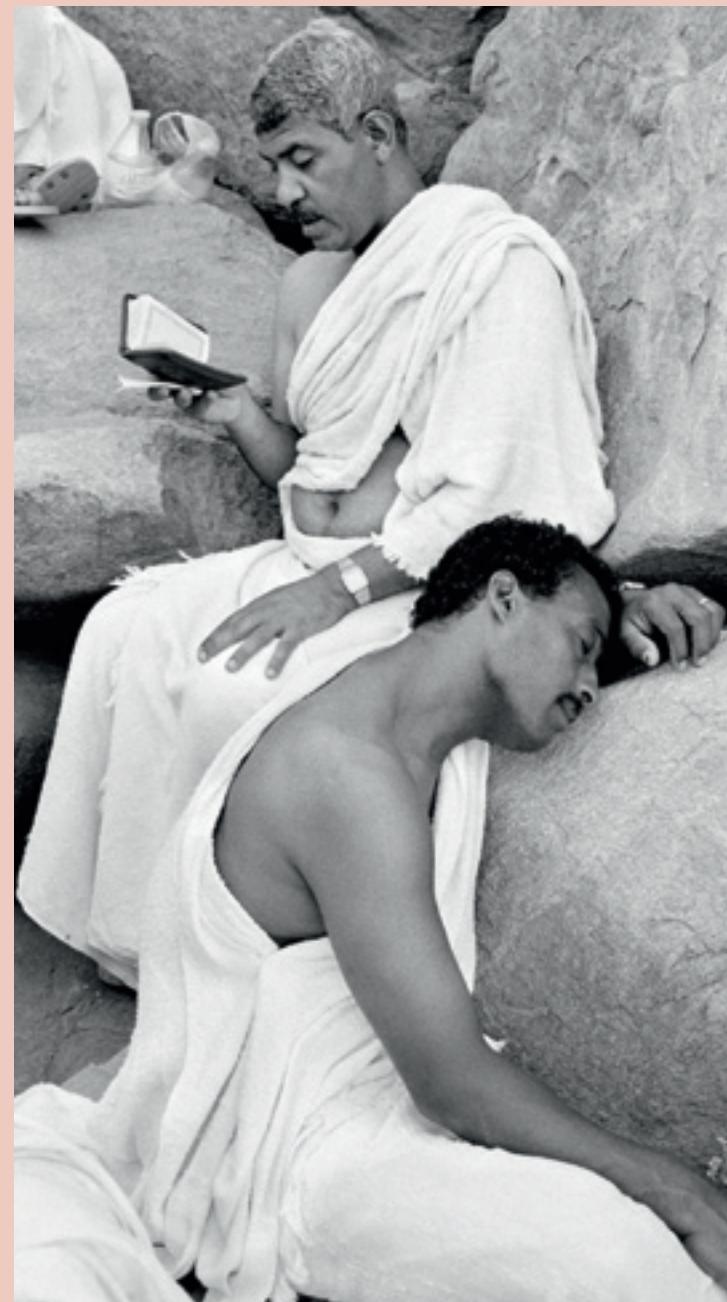
**Bruges**  
**Intermezzo Opera Festival 2008:** Festival and competition with young artists from several countries performing in gala performances and concerts  
**Until AUG 2** in the Concertgebouw and the Magdalenaalzaal Theater www.intermezzofoundation.org

**Deurne**  
**A World of Comedy:** Stand-up with Philippe Geubels, Bert Gabriëls and Michael Van Peel (in Dutch)  
**JULY 17** 20.30 at Openluchttheater Rivierenhof, Turnhoutsebaan 232 070.222.192, www.openluchttheater.be

**Ghent**  
**10 Days Off:** Festival of electronic music and visual and sonic art  
**JULY 18-28** at Vooruit, Sint Pietersnieuwstraat 23 and SMAK, Citadelpark www.10daysoff.be

**Gent Jazz Festival:** annual festival (formerly Blue Note Record Festival), featuring Diana Krall, Herbie Hancock, Pat Metheny Trio, Erykah Badu, CocoRosie, Gabriel Rios, Jef Neve and Kobe Proesmans, among others  
**Until JULY 20** at De Bijloke, Jozef Kluykensstraat 2 0900.69.92, www.gentjazz.com

## Don't miss this week



## Summer of Photography

**Until 14 September, across Belgium, www.summerofphotography.be**

Perhaps with some premonition about the weather, Bozar has organised the Summer of Photography festival, with 29 participants in Brussels, Antwerp, Tervuren and Horne hosting some outstanding photo exhibitions. In Antwerp, Fifty-One Fine Art Photography celebrates its eighth birthday with a group show that screams "party". In the capital, the Goethe Institute has brought in two modern German photographers: Kathrin Ahlt's work is reminiscent of impressionistic painting, while Jörg Sasse reinvents the boundaries of still life. Over at Botanique, Magnum photographer Abbas presents *The Children of Abraham* (photo), a fascinating, comprehensive look at the big three religions – Christianity, Islam and Judaism – in 130 black-and-white photos. The Paris-based Iranian photographer began the worldwide project just after September 11, and his accounts are sometimes tender, sometimes confusing. On 29 July, Abbas will be at the venue to present *Iran Diary*, a lecture on his work in Iran from the revolution to today.

**MiramirO Festival:** International street theatre festival with fourteen premieres and nine new productions in public spaces  
**JULY 20-27**, www.miramiro.be

**The Ghent Festival/Gentse Feesten:** International cultural festival originating in the Middle Ages ranked the largest festival in Europe. It includes the following festivals: Straattheater, Blue Note, Ten Days Off and Puppetbusker  
**JULY 19-28**, www.gentsefeesten.be

**Tokyo Drums:** Japanese music show  
 Until NOV 5 at Capitole, Graaf van Vlaanderenplein 5 0900.69.00

**Knokke-Heist**  
**Cavalia:** equestrian show  
**Until AUG 31** at Knokke-Heist train station, under big top 0900.69.001, www.sherpa.be

## Leuven

**Zomer van Sint-Pieter (Summer of Saint Peter):** Weekday lunchtime classical and new music concerts  
**Until AUG 29** 12.15 at Sint-Pieterskerk, Grote Markt and 30CC-Wagehuys, Brusselsestraat 63 016.23.84.27, www.midis-minimes.be

## Molenveld Boechout

**Sfinks Mixed Festival:** World music festival including Balkan Beatz celebrations, circus, street theatre and film  
**JULY 17-20** across Molenveld Boechout www.sfinks.be

## Watou

**Poëziezomer (Poetry summer):** Festival of contemporary art, architecture and poetry  
**Until SEP 7** in indoor and outdoor venues across Watou www.poëziezomerswatou.be

## INTERVIEW

# Yoko Mori

**Professor Yoko Mori is a world-renowned expert on the Bruegel family of painters. From her post at the Meiji University in Tokyo, she explains her passion for the 16th-century Flemish artists**

**Y**oko Mori first visited Belgium during her studies in Germany in the early 1960s—but only briefly. After earning a Master's degree in the United States, she came for a longer visit and fell in love with the country.

In 1976, she received a scholarship from the Belgian government to study Bruegel and his contemporaries under the guidance of Dr Roger H Marijnissen, former Head of the Department of Conservation of the Royal Institute of Art Heritage in Brussels.

"Dr Marijnissen suggested that, rather than reading contemporary scholarly monographs, I should direct my research towards primary sources and folk books to understand the kind of literary background Bruegel drew upon to produce his allegorical paintings," she recalls.

The result was a 370-page book containing more than 570 illustrations of Bruegel's complete works, entitled *The Complete Paintings of Pieter Bruegel the Elder*, published in 1988. Professor Mori was surprised and delighted when it proved so popular. By 2003, it was in its seventh edition, "which was amazing considering it cost the equivalent of €330," she says.

Mori is currently working on an eighth edition which contains the results of her latest research and extends the period to include the life and works of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's descendants, all the way to his great-grandsons. It's expected to be published later this year.

Her research brings her to Flanders at least twice a year, and she is always delighted when she can spend an extended period in the region. "I love the cities in Flanders because they hold such treasures and are so easily accessible,"

she explains. "To go from one side of Tokyo to the other can take two or three hours. But in Flanders, an hour's travel can take me from Brussels to Antwerp, Mechelen, Bruges or Ghent, each one a pearl. Flanders is a string of pearls."

In addition to her new edition of *The Complete Paintings*, Mori has been conducting a comparative study of Bruegel's "Netherlandish Proverbs" (1559) and the Japanese proverbs in old Japanese art. She points out how Bruegel's representation of "casting pearls before swine" corresponds to Utagawa Kuniyoshi's "gold coins to a cat" (1840). Both indicate the uselessness of giving valuable advice to people who are unable to appreciate it. Her next project is a comparative study between Bruegel's "Children's Games" and Japanese ukiyo-e woodcuts.

Mori's work has helped to make Bruegel one of the most popular European painters in Japan, replacing the French impressionists (who became known to Japanese people in 1959, when the Matsu-



val and Renaissance culture."

This swelling popularity is due to a number of exhibitions held in Japan on Bruegel and his dynasty. The first was in 1972 at the Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura, featuring 91 prints either made by Bruegel himself or in his style.

## "To the Japanese, Bruegel's paintings embody the essence of the European heart."

kata Collection was donated to the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo). However, Bruegel has been a favourite for the Japanese since the 1970s as the symbol of the "medieval" world.

"To the Japanese, his paintings embody the essence of the European heart," says Mori. "Bruegel is considered by Japanese intellectuals to be the nearest thing to a condensation of European medi-

In 1989, an exhibition called *The Prints of Pieter Bruegel the Elder* was held at various venues over a four-month period. Professor Mori gave public lectures at three of these venues: Tokyo, Kurume and Mie.

"Each time, I was impressed by the audience's eagerness to learn more about the allegorical meanings of Bruegel's prints and paintings. The younger generation paid

special attention to his versatility as a painter, including his delineation of the Alpine landscape, his technological observation of ships and their construction and his thorough familiarity with Flemish folklore, including the ordinary life and work of peasants."

The first original painting by Bruegel ever shown in Japan was "Haymaking" in 1990, from the National Gallery in Prague. Nearly half a million visitors saw it, which boosted enthusiasm for the Flemish master among the Japanese public. In 2001, *Masterpieces of Flanders' Golden Age* from the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp – which included works by Bruegel and his sons – toured five museums and was televised by the Japan Broadcasting Corporation in its programme *Sunday Museum*.

Bruegel has also appeared in Japanese novels. The first was *Dark Pictures*, published in 1946 by Noma Hiroshi, in which the main

character compares his own agony during his lonely and depressed days to the suffering, torment and spiritual anguish of the figures in Bruegel's paintings. More recently, the best-selling novel *Bruegel's Family* by Sono Ayako (1992) consists of 24 chapters, each named after one of Bruegel's proverbs or the title of one of his paintings.

This interest in Japan has led to increasing numbers of Japanese tourists visiting Flanders, but Professor Mori is keen to impress on them that they should not focus only on the major cities. "They have to go to the Bokrijk Open Air Museum near Genk," she enthuses. "For anyone interested in seeing the kind of cottages and farm buildings that Bruegel painted, it is an exceptional place...another pearl on the necklace!"

**Interview by Denzil Walton**

**online**  
[www.breughel.8m.net](http://www.breughel.8m.net)

## THE LAST WORD

**what they're saying in Flanders**

### Beauty and the beast

"I see a lot of plastic surgery. Every kind: breast enhancements, nose corrections, lip injections. And some of them are really badly done."

**Alizée Poulichek**  
Miss Belgium  
competing for the Miss Universe  
title won by Miss Venezuela

### Nothing bothers me

"My health is great, I still look good, and I've got an interesting life. Why would anything bother me?"

**Debbie Harry**  
pop goddess, now 63  
who closed the Rock Zottegem  
festival with her band Blondie

### Best beach

"Some remote beaches elsewhere on the coast may be more beautiful to look at, but most people who come to the seaside still like a bit of comfort."

**Linda De Mey**  
Blankenberge tourism boss  
whose town was voted best  
beach by *De Gentenaar*

**Climatechange**

**VisschersKoppen**

**Openaircinema**

**Ostend Galaxy**

**Studios**

**Windmills**

**MurielleScherre**

**next week in Flanders Today**