



Murielle Scherre, p.16



That sinking feeling

What climate change could do to Flanders

Emma Davis

Sea levels are creeping higher, scorching heat waves interspersed with flash floods have become the norm, people

sleep under mosquito nets, and thousands have been killed by tropical diseases. This could be the fate of the Flemish within just 40 years if temperatures continue

rising at their present rate.

Thanks to a proliferation of greenhouse gases, mainly carbon dioxide and methane, our climate is changing. These gases are, in

small doses, essential to keep in some of the heat we get from the sun. But, as more of them are chugged out from power plants, landfill rubbish sites and manu-

facturing, the earth's temperature gradually rises.

Global temperatures have risen about three quarters of a degree

Continued on page 3



Business

One of the most sophisticated recording studios in the Benelux started out in a chicken shed in the depths of Antwerp province. It now attracts professionals from all over the world.

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Arts

Open-air cinemas are springing up on beaches and town squares all over Flanders. So head on down to a screen near you and just pray that the clouds don't burst.

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Active

Mmmmh is a clever name for a kitchen shop where you can learn to cook like a Michelin-starred chef. Stéphanie Duval puts on an apron and tries out some tricky recipes.

11

Belgium in the international spotlight

No cucumber stories this year

Derek Blyth

They call it *komkommertijd*, cucumber time, when the country goes on holiday and newspapers have to make up stories about giant cucumbers to fill their pages. But this year has been different. The Belgian papers are full of big stories, ranging from Leuven-based InBev's €52 billion acquisition of America's biggest brewer to the plummeting value of Fortis bank's shares.

The biggest story broke just over a week ago when Yves Leterme submitted his resignation to the King. Leterme was still prime minister when *Flanders Today* went to press (the King had not yet accepted his resignation), but it looks increasingly likely that this may be the end of the road for the hard-working politician

from Ypres and former minister-president of Flanders Region.

Leterme has come a long way since the election of June 2007 when he won the second-highest number of preferential votes in the country's history – some 800,000. He has struggled over the past 13 months to form a coalition that can push through essential state reforms, but now believes that there is no way forward.

The publishing schedule of *Flanders Today* had to be pushed forward this week because of the national holiday on Monday, so we cannot say anything more about the evolving crisis. For the latest news from the Flemish press in English, go to the Press Room on www.flandertoday.be.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Frietmuseum

Flanders has its fair share of odd and unexpected museums. There's the hairdressing museum in Sint Niklaas, the brick museum in Boom and now the frites museum in Bruges.

The British call them chips, the Americans say French fries and the French order them as *pommes frites*. But they are essentially a Belgian speciality, even if no one can say for sure who invented them (the oddest theory, promoted by Flemish frites specialist Paul Ilegems, is that they were invented by the Spanish mystic St Teresa of Avila.)

Antwerp already has a small frites museum, located in a first-floor room above the Frituur Max on Groenplaats. But the Bruges museum is a much more ambitious undertaking.

You know it is serious the moment you set eyes on the building it occupies – a beautiful 1399 trading house in Vlamingstraat built by merchants from Genoa. The Genoese left town long ago, and the building has been used since as a cloth hall, café, hotel, reading room, cinema and bank.

In its latest incarnation, it provides a striking setting for a collection of some 400 pieces of frites memorabilia, including a replica frites stand, some antique deep-friers and a series of photographs of those roadside *frituur* vans that line the routes of

Belgium.

The museum usefully provides a brief history of the potato, beginning with the cultivation of wild potatoes in the high Andes some 8,000 years ago. The vegetable probably reached Europe in the 16th century, brought back in the holds of Spanish galleons. For many years, it was regarded as unsuitable for human consumption and fed only to animals, but it finally became part of the French diet in the early 19th century.

Food historians are still hunting around for someone to credit with the invention of the fried potato. One theory is that potatoes were first fried in Belgium during an exceptionally hard winter in the 1700s. The rivers had frozen and locals who could no longer catch fish took to frying potatoes cut in the shape of fish. It all sounds a bit, well, fishy.

As you wander around the museum, you might start to get a little peckish. No need to rush out to the nearest *frikot*. The owners have thoughtfully fitted the basement with all the equipment they need to offer a perfect portion of *frietjes*, served in a paper cone with a squirt of mayonnaise.

Derek Blyth

online

www.frietmuseum.be



Flanders Today

independent newsweekly

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FACE OF FLANDERS

Belgia



Daniël Termont

‘Thanks to you, she can dance barefoot here,’ and ‘Thanks to you, other cities are jealous of us,’ are a couple of the slogans from a current poster campaign in Ghent. The city’s famed festival is here again. The flurry of red and blue posters aims to draw attention to the official organisers and sponsors of this ten-day event. After all, their support is essential if this increasingly popular city festival is to continue free of charge. The mayor of Ghent, Daniël Termont, knows this better than anyone.

“Today, with about 1.8 million visitors over ten days, we might rightly claim the title of ‘largest cultural folk festival in Europe.’ And, best of all, most of the open-air performances are free. We’re used to it by now, but still have to make it happen every year,” says the mayor.

“On a sunny day, the number of visitors downtown can reach a peak of almost 250,000 – that’s more than the number of people living in the entire city of Ghent. I think we have now reached a good level – both in terms of quantity and quality. As mayor, I must make sure that Ghent can continue to ‘handle’ its festival.”

To put together an event on this scale, the organisation has to be really outstanding. The City of Ghent increased its subsidies by 13 percent this year compared to 2007 (from €1,092,000 to €1,240,000), almost half of which goes to the organisers. They, in turn, rely to a large extent on sales and sponsorship, so the right thing to do during the Gentse Feesten is to buy your drinks from official, poster-adorned organisers.

Termont isn’t just making time to enjoy the festival; he is actually taking the stage himself. He performs in a comedy as one of the voice trainers for a group called *De Zingende Beenhouwers* (The Singing Butchers) as they prepare to represent Belgium at the Eurovision Song Contest next year in Moscow. “Those who know me know that, with the mayor of Ghent, humour is never far away. That’s why I am taking part in this performance. And besides, in all modesty, what better person to teach these guys the Ghent dialect than me?”

When he became mayor in December 2006, Termont announced that a successful politician must give the biggest part of his life to the people. It is no coincidence, then, that Termont is such a big fan of the Ghent Festival – a festival of, and for, the people. It’s something of a miracle that we all get to wander the streets of Ghent every summer, sipping beer and enjoying free music on every corner. This generous gift is a reflection of the city’s democratic, rebellious spirit. Since the late 1800s, the concept of the Ghent Festival has barely changed from its original ideal that everyone should be able to join in the festivities, regardless of social class or income.

“We are what we have claimed to be for a long time: a sparkling, cultural city, accessible to all. I am a happy mayor, isn’t that obvious?” he asks, laughing heartily.

Robyn Boyle

De Zingende Beenhouwers perform until July 24 at the Conservatory, Hoogpoort 64, in Gent.

online

www.uitbureau.be

TALKING DUTCH

notes on language



zoektocht

Very few of us spend much time looking for the Holy Grail these days. Centuries ago it was considered the ultimate quest, but in these more materialistic times, searching for the impossible seems to be out of fashion. Yet the call to “seek and ye shall find” still spurs searchers on to uncover mysteries. Now, before this becomes a religious tract, I should explain that these thoughts have risen to the surface after reading about one of the mysteries of Flanders which still has people searching.

It began in 1934 when two panels of the *Het Lam Gods* – the Lamb of God by Jan van Eyck painted in 1432 – were stolen from Saint Bavo’s Cathedral in Ghent and a ransom was demanded. One panel was soon recovered; the other, titled *De Rechvaardige Rechters*, the Honorable Judges, has not been seen since.

Theories abounded as to the panel’s whereabouts. Amateur sleuths claim to have deciphered codes in the letters of a certain Arsène Goedertier, who confessed some months after the theft as he lay dying that he had written the ransom letters. His last words were: “*Ik alleen weet waar het Lam Gods is...*” (“Only I know where the Lamb of God is...”). What a way to go!

The painting has done some travelling over the years: in the 19th century part of it ended up in Germany and was only returned as part of war reparations after 1919. It was then reunited with the rest of the painting for a few years before the 1934 theft. In 1940 it was rushed out of the country with other national treasures only to be seized in France and stashed in an Austrian salt mine, where the Americans discovered it in 1945. Finally, it was returned to the Vrijdkael in Saint Bavo’s Cathedral to be joined by a copy of the stolen panel.

A few weeks ago the quest or *zoektocht* was back on the front pages: *de politie van Gent kreeg een tip binnen* – the Ghent police received a tip. Someone claimed to have deciphered one of Goedertier’s letters and knew where the panel was hidden. In the past there had been many such tips followed by searches, though you would have thought that 74 years after the theft the tip would have been quietly shelved. But no: *Een 20-tal speurders kwamen ter plaatse en met een graafmachine braken ze de vloer van een ondergrondse parkeergarage in Gent open*. Yes, 20 detectives arrived with a digger and broke up the floor of an underground garage in Ghent! They had een speciale radar with them to detect the metal casing the tipster claimed would be protecting the panel. Alas, it was all for nothing.

You can join the *zoektocht* by going to the many related websites. Or wait for all to be revealed, next year, they say.

Alistair MacLean

online

www.sintbaafskathedraal-gent.be

FEATURE

Shutterstock



Freak hurricanes are most likely caused by climate change, say many scientists

Climate catastrophe – what in the world is happening?

Continued from page 1

in the last 100 years, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a United Nations and World Meteorological Organisation body. Eleven of the 12 years between 1995 and 2006 were the hottest on record.

Sea levels are already rising at an alarming rate. Since 1961, they have gone up by an average 1.8 millimetres per year and since 1993 by an average 3.1 millimetres. An increase of one metre in the sea level could put 63,000 hectares of land in Belgium at a negative altitude – meaning underwater.

While low-lying developing countries such as Bangladesh are set to suffer sooner and more severely from climate change, one-tenth of Belgium could be under water by the end of the millennium, according to Belgian climate change scientist Jean-Pascal van Ypersele who is also a vice-chair of an IPCC working group.

Worst-case scenario: We could see a Belgium in which only the spire of Antwerp cathedral is visible and the seaside resort Knokke has become a destination for snorkelling.

Cataclysmic scenarios aside, Flanders will witness at least some of these catastrophic elements of climate change, according to van Ypersele who co-authored a report on the impact of climate change in Belgium on behalf of environmental group Greenpeace.

"In the next 50 years, we will see an increase in the frequency of heat waves and in the intensity of rain, which leads to flooding. These are two changes that will be the most visible," he says.

Freak weather events such as the heat wave in Europe in 2003,

which killed thousands, Hurricane Katrina, which caused devastation in New Orleans and the flash flooding we have seen in Northern Europe are most likely caused by climate change, and their probability is increased with higher temperatures, according to many scientists.

On its coastline, Belgium is already seeing more warm water species such as jellyfish. "These fish probably come on the hulls of ships, but the fact that the water is warmer means they can survive,"

"The worst-case scenario for 2044 talks about King William of Great Britain dying of West Nile Virus"

says van Ypersele. The sea might become more inviting temperature-wise, but the risk of a jellyfish sting is not good news for swimmers.

Warmer water itself results in higher sea levels, a process called thermal expansion, and this, coupled with the melting of glaciers, ice caps and the possible melting of the West Antarctica and Greenland ice sheets, are big risks for low-lying coastal regions, including Belgium's.

Scientists believe already that there might be no ice over the North Pole this summer since the ice there at the moment is atypically only one-year old and melts more easily. They also think that the West Antarctica and Greenland ice sheets could melt with a rise of another one to four degrees.

Belgium will also have to learn to battle with tropical diseases borne by ticks and mosquitoes, which will no longer just have an annoy-

ing bite but could become killers. Van Ypersele in his worst-case scenario for 2044 talks about King William of Great Britain dying of West Nile Virus. He says it as a means of jolting public awareness, but maintains that it is all within the realm of possibility.

There is some good news: rising temperatures could improve crop yields, at least temporarily. But this small bright spot on the horizon would be overshadowed if freak weather events do become more frequent. Farmers, who will find

it increasingly hard to cope with droughts and flooding, face a difficult future.

Scientific theory about climate change has its opponents. A small minority of scientists and politicians believe the rises in temperature we see are temporary or, if they agree we are indeed on a long-term upward trend, deny that it is the fault of human activity. They attribute the change to sunspots or simply a natural cycle of warmer temperatures.

Van Ypersele has plenty to say about that. "I'm a sceptic. All scientists are sceptics. I don't believe in anything I have not seen proved. I am confident that the scientific theory is correct. None of the so-called climate sceptics have come up with any articles that are able to disprove the solidity of the climate change theory."

He likens the debate to a well-known one from the last century.

"For years, tobacco companies said the same thing about the link between tobacco and cancer. Now everyone is convinced. It took many years to get there. The link between CO₂ and climate change is at least as solid."

When it comes to taking action, most politicians agree, at least in their rhetoric, that something should be done. The problem is that proposals so far for regulating greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating the effects of climate change have been unambitious. Belgium's climate minister Paul Magnette has just announced the outcome of his discussions with industry, non-governmental organisations and climate change experts. These Lente van het Leefmilieu (Spring of the Environment) talks, however, have resulted in many words but little action.

"If you look at the documents, you'll be impressed by the number of measures that have been proposed. But none of them are very substantial," says Bram Claeys, climate change policy officer for environmental group Bond Beter Leefmilieu Vlaanderen. "There is a proposal to increase the use of offshore energy in the North Sea, but that's about it. It's very disappointing."

When it comes to greenhouse gas emissions, one of Belgium's biggest problems is with transport. Being at the heart of Europe, it is a transit country. Road transport accounts for more than one-fifth of total emissions in the European Union, and international shipping makes up about four percent of the global total, according to estimates by industry itself.

"Transport is disproportionately important," confirms Claeys. "To make matters worse, the Belgian government wants to focus our economy more on transport."

On a European level, politicians give the impression of being ambitious and of leading the world in the fight against climate change. In January, the European Commission introduced a range of legislative proposals to tackle the problem, including tougher rules on emissions.

The EU has said it wants to limit the global temperature rise to two degrees because a rise above this would be enough to see many devastating effects of climate change play out. To achieve this, the EC proposed cuts in emission levels of 20% by 2020, compared to 2005 levels.

The EC has

said that if all major economies would sign an international agreement on climate change, then it would up its emissions reduction target to 30% by 2020.

Van Ypersele is less than impressed. "Two degrees is a high number if we want to be sure we don't melt the Greenland ice sheet. If we want to have a reasonable probability of staying below two degrees, we have to reduce even more."

As for Belgian progress, he says: "The government is to a large extent implementing what is expected by the international community and by the European Council. But up until now, I have not really had the impression it had anticipated the kind of decisions needed to protect the climate."

To cut emissions, the EU has created a carbon market. Regulators set a cap on carbon emissions, and a company, such as energy group Electrabel or steelmaker ArcelorMittal, is allocated some allowances and has to pay for the rest. If it produces lower emissions, it can sell its extra allowances on the market to companies that have exceeded their quota.

Companies are also allowed to offset their carbon emissions in Europe by engaging in projects to lower emissions in developing countries such as China and India. Critics say emissions must be reduced globally, not simply offset or shifted to another country meaning the overall level is the same. "In the implementation of EU legislation, there are many loopholes," says Claeys.

With or without regulation, it would seem that Flanders will have to face up to the devastating effects of climate change. The question now remains as to whether the government can become more ambitious before van Ypersele's and others' apocalyptic scenarios become reality.

online
www.ipcc.ch



The world in his hands: climate change expert Jean-Pascal Van Ypersele predicts floods and heatwaves

Frédéric Delaere, UCL



welcome²

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The Welcome Offer Expat

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One laptop a day goes astray at Zaventem



Travellers through Brussels Airport lose one laptop and about ten GSMs every day, according to figures from the Brussels Airport Company, which runs the airport. Most people get their property back, the BAC said. By comparison, of the 12,000 people who lost a laptop in an American airport, only 30% get their computer back.

"Our people go actively looking for the owners of lost property," said Jan Van der Cruysse of BAC. And he offered travellers some advice: "Make sure every piece of baggage has a label attached with your address details," he said. "Put a business card in your laptop case, for example, or in your camera-case."

Thanks to an agreement with the three main mobile phone operators, BAC has even less trouble returning GSMs to their rightful owner. Each phone has a unique IMEI number which links it to its owner – unless you're using a pre-paid Sim card (in which case it helps to have a number prominent in your contacts file for Home or Self).

Lost property recovered at the airport that remains unclaimed is sold off at auction after four months, with the proceeds going to BAC itself to help finance the Lost & Found service.

NEWS FLASH

An Antwerp couple **missing for four years** have been found in an Italian mortuary where they have lain unidentified since Christmas 2004. Elke Meyvis and her friend Vincent – an escapee from a psychiatric clinic – vanished in the Ardennes in the summer of 2004. Meyvis' parents tried to interest police in the disappearance, without success. In May this year the Dutch missing persons programme Vermist broadcast an appeal for information, leading to the discovery of the bodies in a town near Livorno. It is thought they died after eating leaves or seeds of the Oleander shrub, an extremely poisonous plant.

The Nederlandse Taalunie – the body which advises on language matters in the Netherlands, Flanders and Suriname, has taken the unusual step of **inventing a word to describe the previous name of a partner in a homosexual marriage**. In heterosexual marriages a woman who takes her husband's name may refer to her "maiden name" – in Dutch *meisjesnaam* – but that is clearly not suitable for a gay man who takes his marriage partner's name. The Taalunie has now, after consultation with language advisers, come up with the alternative *geboortenaam* or "birth name". The word will now be available for use in official documents before it makes its way into dictionaries.

A Flemish paleontologist has proved the existence of flying creatures 50 million years older than Archaeopteryx, long thought to be the first-ever winged creature. Koen Stein, a Ghent University doctoral student, made the discovery while working a Bristol University in the UK. According to a paper published in the latest issue of *Paleontology*, there were two lizards in the Triassic period which glided and soared on "wings" made of extended ribs. That was long before the giant dinosaurs lived, in the Jurassic period. The team tested models of the two creatures – which may have been male and female of the



same species – in wind-tunnels of the department of aerospace engineering, to find they were more aerodynamic than previously thought.



De Winne could command ISS

Belgian astronaut Frank De Winne (below) could be the first **European captain of the International Space Station (ISS)**, according to recent rumours. De Winne was named earlier this year for a six-month stay on the ISS from May next year, together with two Russians, two Americans and one Canadian. De Winne could be in line to take over command of the station for the last two months of his stay.

New website on Flemish in Brussels

The Flemish Community Commission has launched a **new four-language website** giving information on the Flemish community in Brussels in Dutch, French, English and German. The English version of Bruselo.info (which takes its name from the Esperanto word for Brussels) offers chapters by guest writers such as Daniel Buyle and Geert Van Istendael on the historical development of Brussels, the government of a Flemish city by French authorities, Brussels in the 20th century and the emergence of a multicultural capital. More information is available on the Dutch pages which will be translated in the near future, the site announced.

online
www.bruselo.info

InBev takes over US brewer

Leuven-based brewer InBev will finance the **takeover of US brewer Anheuser-Busch** (AB) in part with €6.2 billion of new capital, the company's financial director said last week. The total price for AB, which agreed to the bid last week, comes to €52 billion, most of it financed by credit. Shares fell back 3.44% on news of the capital increase, details of which have not been given.

FIFTH COLUMN



The King's Speech *

The unauthorised version

Dear compatriots,

The Queen and I are deeply distressed by the political crisis our country is going through. Again I have been called on to play an important role as a mediator. I seem to be the only person who can keep this country up and running. Flattering though this is, I have to add that this is ruining our summer holiday. For the second year in row! The typical Belgian weather we have been having is not contributing to my wife's good spirits either. And yes, we do worry about the future of Belgium too. Anyway. This year, I would like to ask you to give some special attention to the many lonely people in this country. Take Yves Leterme. Was there ever a man more lonesome than the former/present prime minister?

This situation is quite new to Leterme. Up until recently Jo Vandeuren, who succeeded Leterme as party president but moved on to become the minister of justice, was always at his side. There were also Inge Vervotte, the young public services minister, and Kris Peeters, the Flemish minister-president, about whose loyalty there never was a doubt. The Flemish Christian Democrats CD&V looked to Leterme as their hero and even applauded him after he had yet again failed to reach an agreement with the francophones. Even the small nationalist party N-VA, who almost by nature distrust just about anyone, put its faith in Yves Leterme.

Admittedly, the many friends of Yves Leterme were all Flemish. But he had some companions amongst the French speakers too. He had an understanding with the liberal vice-prime minister Didier Reynders, who granted the premiership to Leterme on condition that he kept the socialist PS out of the coalition. President Elio Di Rupo remained forever grateful to Leterme because he ended up welcoming the PS into government, in spite of the agreement with Reynders. And Joëlle Milquet... Ah, the hours spent talking to Joëlle, the president of the francophone Christian Democrats who turned out to be such an inexorable debater.

Leterme must miss these long conversation by now, for ever since he resigned as prime minister most of these people seem to have deserted them. Some blame him for giving up so easily. Others blame him for hanging on for too long, compromising too much and not getting any results. Somehow, no matter what Leterme did, he could never do it right. So please, while you are downing a Ricard in the Provence, or slurping a cocktail in Kusadasi, spare a thought for this man. He deserves a break. Oh, and do not worry about me. With politicians queuing up the palace steps, I will be far from lonely over the next couple of days. Apparently, I am not out of a job yet.

* Not the actual speech King Albert delivered on June 21st, Belgium's National Holiday.

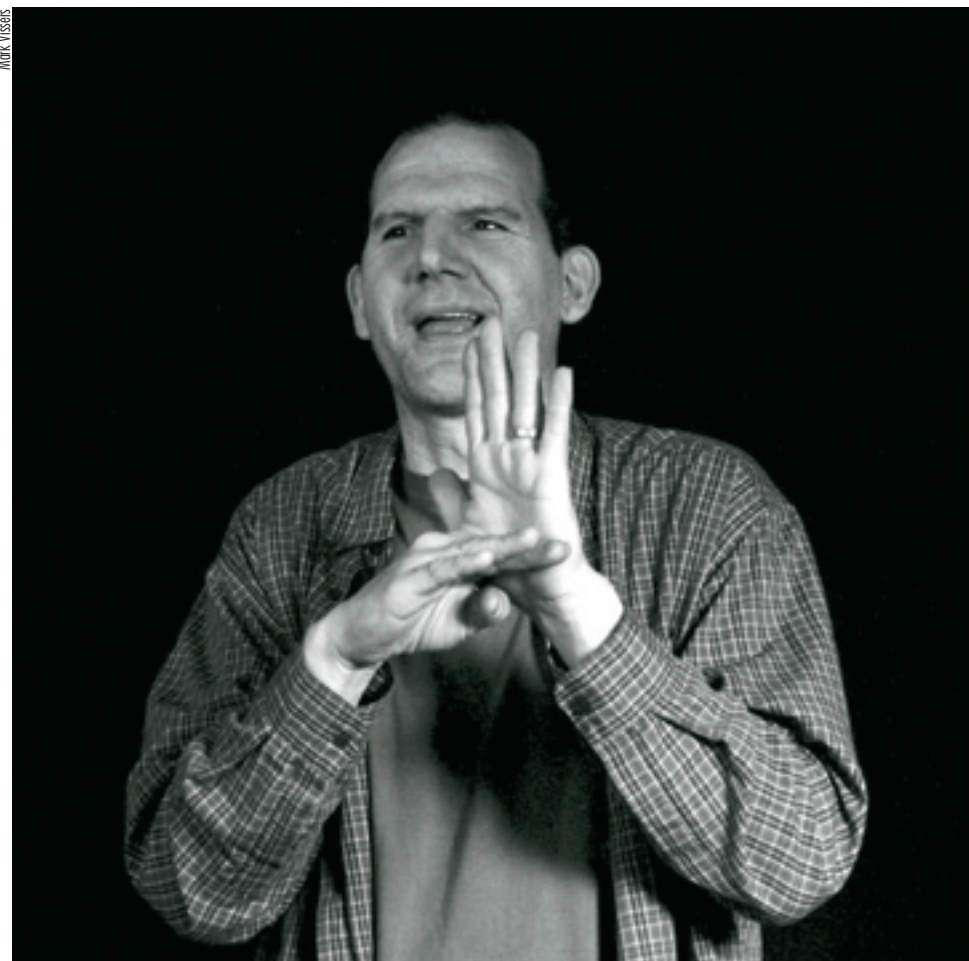
Anja Otte

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

FEATURE

Signs of the Times

The first Flemish sign language course takes off in Antwerp



Stéphanie Duval

Antwerp's Lessius University College is to launch the first academic course in Flemish Sign Language this October. The Department of Applied Language Studies will

offer students the chance to study Flemish Sign Language as a third language, alongside French, Spanish or Russian.

The course will teach students to understand and use the language themselves, just as they would

with any other language. As well as lessons on vocabulary and grammar taught by both native and non-native Dutch speakers, they will be introduced to deaf culture.

In the past, sign languages weren't considered as real languages and their use was sometimes even prohibited. It wasn't until the 1980s that training was introduced for the first time for Flemish interpreters. Then the government introduced new legislation offering deaf people the opportunity to call on the services of free interpreters in certain situations, such as visits to the doctor.

The legislation has subsequently been modified so that deaf people

can now resort to interpreters while they are still at school or applying for a job. As a result, the demand for interpreters of Flemish Sign Language has been steadily rising. "Interpreters are needed for ever more complex assignments," explains Myriam Vermeerbergen, director of the Flemish Sign Language Centre. "Take the case of cultural events, for example, or national and international congresses, or deaf students studying in higher education."

After researching a doctorate on the grammar of Flemish Sign Language, Myriam Vermeerbergen

times unable to follow television programmes, even with subtitles. The Flemish Sign Language Centre has been lobbying the main TV channels to include an interpreter in some programmes, but so far without success.

"It's not always easy to get the financial backing for our projects," says Vermeerbergen, "but we try our best to set up new initiatives on a regular basis." The Flemish Sign Language Centre is currently translating Dutch children's books into Flemish Sign Language DVDs so that parents of deaf children have a useful aid when it comes

"Sign languages are not visual representations of spoken languages. They are natural languages in their own right."

gen became involved in developing a better understanding of the linguistic structure and use of Flemish Sign Language and its recognition as a real language. "Sign languages are not visual representations of spoken languages," explains Vermeerbergen. "They are natural languages in their own right."

That's why deaf people are some-

times unable to follow television programmes, even with subtitles.

Vermeerbergen has worked hard to set up an academic Flemish Sign Language programme. "I'm really pleased that we were so well-received at Lessius University College, as Flemish Sign Language fits perfectly in their Department of Applied Language Studies. It is taught there like any other language."

The status of sign language as an academic course is very important, Vermeerbergen says, as it helps to encourage scientific research in the field. "There is definitely a need for more research on the grammar of Flemish Sign Language and sign language interpreting in Flanders."

Vermeerbergen believes that the interpreters graduating from this programme will be up to the challenges they will face in the future. "Not that the existing courses on Flemish Sign Language are inferior, but they don't prepare students as well as a full-time academic education," she says.

The first generation of Flemish Sign Language interpreters are due to receive their Master's degree in 2012. Vermeerbergen is quietly optimistic about the future: "I think there is a real demand for these interpreters, which will continue to grow as Flemish people become more interested in deaf culture and the empowerment of the deaf community."



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No golden share for Belgium in Suez merger

France now controls most of Belgium's energy supply



Alan Hope

The Belgian government will not be getting a golden share in the merged Suez-GDF energy giant, after all it was announced last week. Despite a promise made by French president Nicolas Sarkozy in May, the golden share deal is now "legally impossible," according to the new group's prospectus.

The official merger of Suez and Gaz de France (GDF) took place last week, after the conditions of the EU competition authorities had been met – principally the divestiture of Distrigas. As a result, the energy market in Belgium is now, with a few minor exceptions, in French hands. The French state owns a controlling minority share of 35.6% in Suez-GDF, which in turn owns the Belgian utility Electrabel. In addition, France has a golden share of its own – a device whereby major national interest can be defended regardless of the holder's voting strength.

Next to the French state, the Belgian billionaire Albert Frère and his GBL group with their business partners own 5.3% of GDF Suez, less than the 9.4% he held in Suez alone but still a serious package, making him by far the largest private shareholder. But Frère is a businessman, not a politician; the Belgian state was supposed to be granted a golden share of its own. During negotiations over the merger, Suez CEO Gérard Mestrallet promised then-prime minister Guy Verhofstadt that Brussels would be granted a golden share. As recently as May this year, on an official visit to Paris, Yves Leterme was assured by President Sarkozy

that the deal was done. Nothing now seems further from the truth.

Belgian government sources describe the objection to the golden share as "nonsense" and point to the French government's similar share. Such shares are quite normal in circumstances where crucial national interests are concerned, such as the guarantee of a stable national energy supply.

No-one is suggesting that France is ever likely to pull the plug on Belgium, but the lack of a golden share means that the country now has precious little say over other aspects of its energy supply, such as price and other conditions.

Meanwhile, it was being suggested in some quarters last week that the problem may have been created by the government itself. According to one report, the last meeting of senior ministers under Guy Verhofstadt in May passed a resolution that the incoming government would hammer out the detail of the plan for the golden share to be granted. But that was never done. The Flemish daily *De Morgen* claimed the dossier had been "neglected".

A search for a solution will doubtless begin as soon as the country has a government again. The greater hope, in the longer term, is that an opening of the market in Belgium and an increase in competition will loosen the stranglehold Paris now has over the country's energy supply. In the meantime, Ghent mayor Daniël Termont is, as chairman of a group of municipalities who own a share of the gas terminal at Zeebrugge, fighting a rearguard action to stop Suez taking control of gas distribution in Belgium.

BUSINESS FLASH

KBC

KBC Asset Management has signed a statement of intent with the Union Bank of India for a joint venture that would allow KBC to sell investment funds in India. KBC Asset Management is already active throughout Asia, and manages a total of €174 billion in funds. UBI meanwhile has 20 million customers in a country where the asset management market has grown by an average of 47% a year since 2003.

Gimv

Koenraad Dejonckheere has been appointed CEO of investment company Gimv with effect from October 1. Dejonckheere, aged 39, is currently corporate banking specialist at KBC Securities. Born in Roeselare, Dejonckheere trained as a civil engineer but has gained a reputation as a deal-maker in the venture capital world.

Bertelsmann

The German media giant Bertelsmann is to sell off its book-clubs in Flanders as part of an effort to concentrate on major markets, the company said. The Flemish book-clubs ECI and cosmoX.be, which sell books, CDs, DVDs and games online, will be affected. The French-speaking Belgique Loisirs will remain active.

Arseus

Wilrijk-based medical supplies provider Arseus reported second-quarter earnings up a healthy 21.3% to €90.4 million. The results, better than expected, put the company on the road to planned annual growth for 2008 of 7%-8%. Only the medical division itself, which provides everything from rubber gloves to hospital beds, performed below expectations, after a change in the law on the provision of wheelchairs.

NMBS

The national rail authority NMBS achieved 90.4% punctuality score in the second quarter of this year, the infrastructure division reported. That's slightly down on the first quarter's 91.3%, but slightly up on the 90.1% in the same period last year. Timekeeping in the evening rush hours was the worst, at 86.6%, while off-peak hours scored best. More than 95.5% of trains arrived on time or within five minutes of time.

Brussels Airlines

The closure of Berlin Tempelhof airport means the end of Brussels Airlines' distinction of being the only international airline to use the airport. Brussels Airlines currently flies six times a day into Berlin Tempelhof, bringing civil servants from the capital of Germany to the capital of Europe. From October BA will fly into Berlin Tegel, which is itself slated for closure in 2011.

Oleon

Vegetable oil processor Oleon, based in Ertevelde near Ghent, saw profits increase from €12m to €30m last year, on sales up 40% to €408. The company, which converts vegetable oils into products to replace petroleum derivatives, gained new dynamism from a factory fire at the beginning of the year, managing director Chris Depreeuw said.

Telenet

Internet and cable company Telenet has increased the data limits for broadband subscribers sooner than anticipated. Increases in data limits and download speeds were promised for August 1, following criticism from the EU and other regulators over the conditions offered by Belgian ISPs. Belgacom, however, stole a march on Telenet by doubling data limits from 12 Gb to 25 Gb with effect from July 1.

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The sound of silence

The most sophisticated recording studio in Flanders started out in a chicken shed in the Antwerp countryside

Marc Maes

Nobody would ever expect to find a world-class recording studio hidden in the quiet outskirts of the Flemish "Kempen" – nevertheless, Galaxy Studios is considered one of the Benelux's leading facilities when it comes to adapting new technology in sound recording. And, to counter the slump in "traditional" music sales (and consequently dropping budgets), the Mol-based sound house decided to follow new paths, ensuring the studio's life among the top players in the market.

Galaxy Studios started out in 1982 when brothers Wilfried and Guy Van Baelen installed a modest 8-track recording device in a chicken shack. Less than 10 years later, the studio had become the first 48-track digital outlet in the Benelux.

A huge building has replaced the chicken shack (though the original structure continued to serve as "studio 2", remaining operational during the whole reconstruction process). Finally, in 1991 the Van Baelen brothers decided to add the extraordinary live room, which would become the flagship studio at Galaxy: a 330 square-metre hall, designed for the recording of big orchestras and classical and jazz ensembles, with a Steinway grand piano in place. Today, the studio is also used as TV production unit for filming video-clips and concerts.

In order to obtain the necessary acoustic insulation, the hall was built with 32cm-thick walls, a massive 45cm floor on mechanical springs and special layered glass – gunshots fired in the recording area are inaudible in the nearby

control room.

Today, Galaxy Studios consists of three recording studios, linked with the three state-of-the-art control rooms, and one mastering-suite. "From the very start, we have worked hard to be the first in adapting the latest technology and searching for new challenges in audio," says managing director Wilfried Van Baelen. "But we always remain faithful to the adage that this technology should serve creativity and not the other way round."

Word soon got around, and recording artists from all over Europe and the US flocked to use the Belgian facility, attracted by the winning combination of clued-up staff, state-of-the-art equipment and a peaceful rural setting. Music icons like American rock roots guitarist Tony Joe White, German heavy metal band the Scorpions and the late jazz fusion master Joe Zawinul are among the big names that came to record in Mol. Also, recent domestic albums by Milow, Jef Neve and Brahim were created here.

The working environment has attracted some of the best recording professionals in the business: in 1999, surround-sound engineer Ronald Prent joined the Galaxy team as resident engineer – he pushed the company to invest in the world's first and largest API Vision surround production console, putting Galaxy Studios on the global map for SACD and DVD-A recording.

Galaxy's list of clients reads like an A-list of stars: Clouseau and Natalia represent local talent, while foreign names include Dutch country and pop singer Ilse DeLange, whose last album went

Platinum, and German alt-rock quartet Guano Apes.

With the growing importance of high definition (HD) image productions, the introduction of new formats – like Blu-Ray and HD-DVD – and the widespread use of surround systems in cinemas, Galaxy Studios decided to invest in the next generation of image-carrier production. "After the SACD/DVDA battle and the condemnation of SACD to a niche format, we were not too happy with another dual format creating consumer confusion and the necessity to serve both platforms," Broos explains. "When Toshiba stopped supporting the HD-DVD format, we decided to go forward with music-related Blu-Ray and SD-DVDs, in both standard and high definition."

Broos says that the Galaxy staff invested a full year in acquiring the technical skills and building an authoring room for the production of DVDs and Blu-Ray discs. "Blu-Ray authoring is a completely new line of business and technology – it's more about computer knowledge than sound engineering."

Today, Galaxy can take care of every stage in the production of music DVDs, from scratch to master and disc authoring. "Contrary to most 'traditional' post-production facilities, we have the tools to make a DVD really sound good. And we have the knowledge and the equipment to become the one-stop-shop for DVD and Blu-Ray – that is our top priority," explains Broos.

The first Blu-Ray disc, entirely produced by Galaxy Studios, will hit the racks in September: a live concert by Dutch band Within Temptation and the Metropole

Orchestra. Captured by 14 high-definition cameras, the entire post-production process was handled in Mol.

Galaxy has also launched an audio-archiving department and a special section for the production of music videos and sound for

movies. "With a spacious studio like ours, recording film scores has become a way of life."

online
www.galaxy.be

It's up to you... Mol



Grammy winner Darcy Proper swapped Manhattan for Mol

Grammy-Award-winning mastering engineer Darcy Proper arrived at Galaxy Studios two and half years ago, bringing more than 15 years of experience in a wide range of audio-industry activities, from live music to recording as Senior Mastering Engineer at Sony Music Studios in New York, where she had built up an impressive list of credentials, including the high resolution mastering of 5.1 surround releases. She also worked with a wide range of artists, from AC/DC to Aaron Neville and Johnny Cash. She's well known in the industry for production work on re-release compilations like *Frank Sinatra in Hollywood* and *The Dave Brubeck Quartet at Carnegie Hall*.

"I was looking for a change," she says. And she certainly found it: from New York City to the little town of Mol in outer Antwerp province. "Although it's certainly different from New York, it's interesting for me because of its central location in Europe. The studio itself is technically equipped in such a way that I can continue to serve my clients on the level that they were accustomed to in the US."

With the current exchange rate and US clients not thinking first about mastering in Europe, Proper's client base changed to more European artists, but the recent Grammy Award-winning project with Donald Fagen happened in Mol when last year's *Morph the Cat* by Steely Dan co-founder Donald Fagen (his first album since 1993) landed Proper her second Grammy award for "Best Surround Album". "That's the point," notes studio manager Ralph Broos. "The Flemish are just too modest – this is a major achievement for any studio here, but people just aren't aware of it."

Proper grew up in Philmont, went to school in nearby New York City, and stayed there for 20 years. Living in Mol is an experience. "Probably because of the hours that I keep, I struggle with the fact that shops are only open during very regular hours," she smiles. "But the people, although a bit more reserved, are very friendly and helpful, once they know you. And there's one habit I really intend to take back to the US: when you're served a cup of coffee, there's always a little cookie or chocolate next to it. That's one of the little traditions I love, a very nice gesture."



Picture perfect: Galaxy's DVD authoring room

Moon, stars, action

Moonlit cinema comes to Flanders



Saffina Rana

There's something very special about gathering at twilight in a public space to watch a film under the stars. Wherever they are held, open air screenings bring with them an infectious festival atmosphere, usually fuelled by a beer tent and people bringing an eclectic array of seating – anything from hammocks and inflatables to old car seats. So long as audiences aren't deluged by rain, there will be plenty to enjoy on outdoor screens throughout the summer.

My favourite in the capital is the PleinOPENAir film and music festival hosted by the volunteers of the Nova independent cinema every other year. Screenings are taking place at a different location each weekend in August until the

16th at sites earmarked for redevelopment. They include Weststation in Molenbeek, the grounds of the RTT building behind Tour & Taxis and Neerpede in Anderlecht.

With an urban theme, the festival will be showing gems that include *Wassup Rockers?* by Larry Clark, *Riff Raff* by Ken Loach, and *Amer Béton*, a Japanese anime by Michael Arias. Short films made especially for the festival will introduce each site and the town planning issues surrounding it. Go early to catch bands like Gurkentopf, Tuareg-inspired Kel Assouf, and electro-burlesque Candie Hank playing before the films.

In Flanders, Mechelen's Sportpark de Nekker will host Drive-In movies on Friday and Saturday nights, opening with *Hancock*

on July 25 and closing with *Babylon A.D.* on August 16 before its general release.

If you fancy watching more than the sunset on the Flanders coast, the organisers of Film op het strand in Zeebrugge have scheduled three shows a day on the beach, every Thursday until 21 August, with a special screen that allows films to be shown in daylight. Children's films kick off at 15.00 followed by musicals at 18.00 and a blockbuster at 20.00-21.00. Highlights include *Finding Nemo*, *Chicago* and *The Devil Wears Prada*. Organisers insist the last film ends no later than 22.15, leaving plenty of time to catch the last train home.

The romantic Astridpark in Bruges will host a one-off screening of the 9th-century Chinese tale of love and revolution, *House of Flying Daggers*, by Zang Yimou on August 5 as part of the Klinkers festival, while the Summer-screen event this year in Kortrijk on August 25 will round off a day of open-air dj's, barbecues and revellerie in Begijnhofpark, with a screening of *The Constant Gardener*.

Meanwhile, in Limburg province, Curieus Terrasfilms will be transporting their screen around ten towns from August 1, closing with *The Kite Runner* on August 18 at the Begijnhof in Sint Truiden.

More information

PleinOPENAir (free): www.nova-cinema.org

Drive-In Movies Brussels: www.driveinmovies.be

Drive-In Movies Mechelen: www.utopolis.be

Film op het strand, Zeebrugge (free): www.bruggeplus.be

Zomer van Antwerpen (free): www.zomervanantwerpen.be

Klinkers, Brugge (free): www.klinkers-brugge.be

Summerscreen Kortrijk (free): www.cinemobiël.com

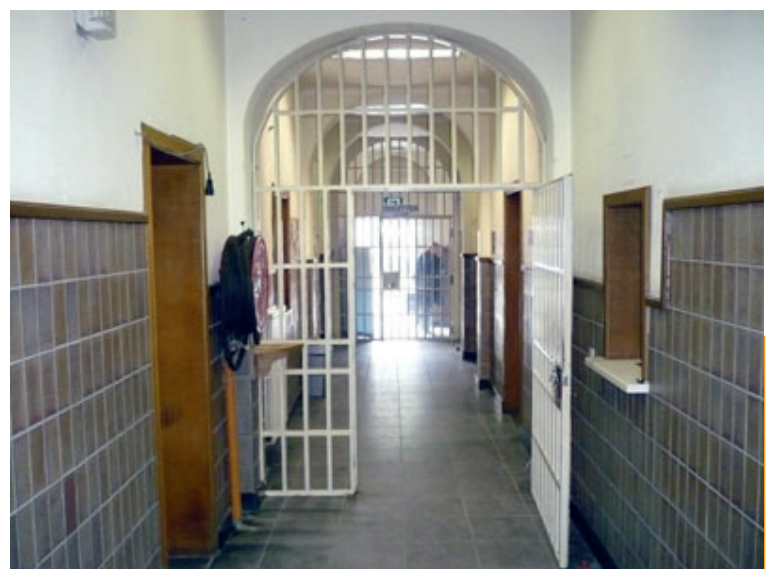
Curieus Terrasfilms, Limburg (free) www.terrasfilms.be

Tongeren Prison screenings: www.gevangenistongeren.be



Drive, he said

Drive-In Movies take up residence at Jubelpark every Friday and Saturday night from August 8 to September 13. The season will open with *Mama Mia!* before it goes on general release across Belgium and aptly includes the Belgian Cannes award winner *Eldorado* by Bouli Lanners, full of big American cars. To celebrate the drive-in's 20th anniversary, the organisers are launching more pedestrian-friendly Walk-In movies in the park, on Wednesdays and Thursdays between August 13 and September 4. The eight films shown will be by popular demand from a selection of around 20 listed on the website.



Behind bars

This year's most original venue for open air screenings must be the old Tongeren prison in Limburg province. You guessed it, the theme is crime related. Every Tuesday from now until August 26, you can enjoy *Sin City*, *Unforgiven* and *Minority Report* within the walls of a disused prison. A tour of the former prison cells is included in the admission charge.



Zomer van Antwerpen 2008

Screen on the Scheldt

As part of the Antwerp Summer festival, sunset screenings on the theme of journeys will be held on the banks of the River Scheldt every day until 24 August. They open with *Into the Wild* on 30 July and follow with the excellent *In this World*, *Road to Guantanamo* and *Lost in Translation*.

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Food heaven

Mmmmh takes cookery to a new level



Stéphanie Duval

Mmmmh is much more than just a cleverly-named food store selling rare products and specialised ingredients. It's also a place where you can discover new techniques and take cooking and wine-tasting classes in three languages (Dutch, French and English). With smart outlets in Brussels and Antwerp, Mmmmh has become a haven for foodies.

As a novice in the kitchen, I was intrigued by the culinary institute, so I signed up for a class on molecular cooking for beginners in Antwerp. Yet I was also slightly frightened, because who knows what "beginners' level" actually means? Would it be a problem that I hardly knew how long to boil an egg?

It turned out that it didn't really matter how much I knew about cooking. While most of the eight participants who joined me for the class could definitely be classified as foodies and were skilful amateur cooks, some of them were just like me: driven to Mmmmh by sheer curiosity and a love for food.

However, it became quite clear right from the beginning that these students were there to learn. Every step of the way, the teacher was confronted with searching and sometimes critical questions. These were answered in a clear and understandable language. I was deeply relieved.

After a short theoretical introduction to molecular cooking, students were divided into small groups, each one charged with preparing one ingredient. But we soon started

to peek at what the others were doing. After all, we wanted to repeat everything at home.

The large open kitchen soon developed a warm atmosphere, with students helping each other out and chatting away as if they were old friends. The generous amounts of wine, along with Spanish music, certainly helped to break the ice. We felt like one big family gathered in the kitchen for an aperitif.

But then it was time for some serious cooking. Our teacher explained about the particular cooking technique known as spherification. We then had to decompose every ingredient we had been slicing and blending, and reshape it into little balls.

We started by making tomato caviar. Hesitantly at first, and then enthusiastically, we let little drops of tomato juice fall from tubes into the brew that would turn the drops into firm balls. Everyone was fascinated by this process, which seemed almost like magic. We repeated the process with mint syrup to create the mint caviar for our chocolate mousse dessert.

Then it was on to the reverse process, which allowed a thin film to form around the ingredient without letting it turn completely solid. Within a short time, we felt like skilled chefs, watching as the small servings of mozzarella and olive juice turned into small bubbles. When we finally got around to tasting our creations, I couldn't repress a certain sense of pride. Here we were after only two hours of class making our very own Michelin-inspired dish.

All right, maybe it wasn't quite as refined or innovative as the dishes produced by the world's top molecular chefs, but we couldn't have been more pleased with ourselves as we sat around the table eating our own creations. I finally knew how to cook.

online
www.mmmmh.be

Milling around

Two historic Flemish windmills have just been restored by local enthusiasts

Marc Maes

Some interesting things are happening on the left bank of the Scheldt. A lot of it involves large-scale industrial development, but there are also serious restoration projects going on to safeguard the heritage. The latest initiative involves the restoration of two old windmills – the Eenhoorn mill near Lillo and 't Veertje closer to Antwerp.

The mills were officially opened last month at Lillo, close to the River Scheldt in the heart of Antwerp's industrial district. "The Eenhoorn windmill is Flanders' oldest stone mill and was built in 1735," explains Johan Veeckman, assistant coordinator of archeology and monuments for Antwerp city. It survived floods and wars, but not the expansion of the port of Antwerp. "The city moved it from its original location in the hamlet of Lillo Kruisweg, which was destroyed during the port expansion, and rebuilt it next to the Tijsmanstunnel," explains Veeckman.

The Veertje mill has a similar history. It was built in the late 18th century in Kwaadmechelen, but reconstructed on Antwerp's left bank in 1937 when the Albert Canal was constructed.

Although both windmills have been restored several times in the past, the organisation Levende Molens, or Living Mills, has done the most to ensure their future. "For the past three decades, volunteers from Levende Molens have preserved the mills of Flanders by keeping them in working condition," explained Dirk Van Mechelen, vice-president of the Flemish Government and Minister for Flemish Heritage, at the reopening ceremony. "Whatever romantic or nostalgic feelings one may have as regards windmills or watermills, they remain machines which are best preserved by being maintained in working state."

The restoration of the two windmills was jointly financed by Antwerp city and several private partners, including Basf and Degussa. The city of Ludwigshafen, where Basf has its headquarters, had already provided a substantial financial injection for the Eenhoorn mill in 1997.

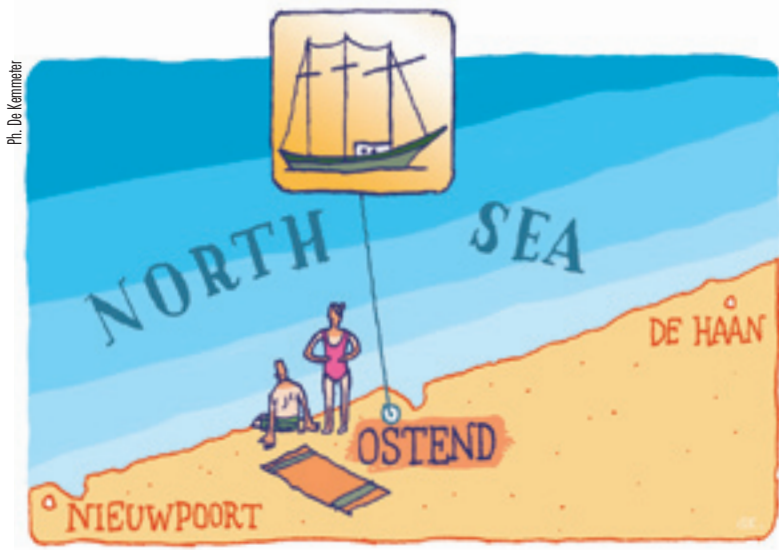
Both mills are listed as national monuments and so qualify for financial support from the Flemish government. "This [project] will enhance both Lillo and Sint Anneke as tourist destinations," says Philip Heylen, Antwerp alderman for culture.



Monumentenzorg Sint-Antwerpen – Jan Wansboon

De Eenhoorn is at Scheldelaan, Lillo, and 't Veertje is at Jachthavenweg, Antwerp. The windmills are open to the public on the last Sundays of July, August and September. Information from the organisation Levende Molens, tel 03.542.06.21.

online
www.levendemolens.be



The city on the sea

Continuing our summer journey along the coast, we arrive at Ostend, the only genuine city on the sea, where artists have mingled with royals for more than a century and a half, creating one of the most cosmopolitan seaside towns in Europe.

Steven Tate

For anyone who likes a city filled with sea breezes, Ostend is the hottest spot on the Belgian coast. Its population of 70,000 is dwarfed by the crowds of

tourists who flock to the city every summer. With events such as fireworks every Monday night on the beach, the annual Paulusfeest festival, and a daily programme of cultural events well into the

autumn, it's easy to see why Ostend is such a popular place.

Like most cities on the sea, Ostend started out as a fishing village. The first settlers put down roots almost 1,000 years ago, and it

became an official city in 1265. For many centuries, local people have earned their living from fish caught in the cold North Sea waters. But Ostend's location has been both a blessing and a curse over the years.

From the 15th to the 18th centuries, the city was often invaded and destroyed by visiting armies on their way to somewhere else, such as the Dutch fighting against Spanish rule during the Eighty



James and the Giant Beach

A few dozen footsteps from the seafront, the former home of the 19th-century painter James Ensor has been transformed into a museum, the James Ensorhuis (Vlaanderenstraat 27). On the ground floor, his aunt's shells-and-souvenir shop has been preserved, while upstairs are Ensor's studio and lounge, complete with reproductions of his dazzling works (the originals, like his 1889 *The Entry of Christ into Brussels*, now hang in some of the world's great museums).

Anglo-Flemish Ensor is just one example of the enduring connection Ostend has with the British Isles. The city boasts an Anglican church dating back to 1865 and other houses of worship that catered to seamen travelling from Britain, Scandinavia and other far-off countries.

The Museum de Plate (Langestraat 69) shows Ostend's maritime connections through a fascinating collection of memorabilia. Much of it relates to the ferry companies that once plied between Ostend and Dover, beginning in 1846 and gradually dying out once the Channel Tunnel opened. The Museum, located in a former townhouse, also displays remnants of the city's folklore, including models of boats and fishing villages, antique tools and fishing gear, and a reconstructed fisherman's pub and boarding room, complete with a soundtrack of screeching seagulls.

What to do

Three major events are scheduled for the coming month to keep visitors entertained. The Theater aan Zee festival (July 30-August 9, www.theateraanzee.be) kicks off the month of August with a variety of musical and theatre performances in venues across the town, including pop heartthrob Gabriel Rios, comedy by Bert Gabriëls and the Bangelijke Sprookjeskarroussel for children.

Now in its 36th year, the annual Paulusfeesten (August 10-16, www.paulusfeesten.be) has everyone grooving to home-grown Belgian talent. From French-singing Flemish electro-pop duo Vive la Fête to Turkish R&B, and from Hadise Live to musical acts playing flamenco, reggae, punk and

rock'n'roll, Paulusfeesten, as they say, has something for everyone. See website for the full programme.

Fuzee (August 19-23, www.fuzee.be) brings Cirque du Soleil-style theatre to the streets with five different shows featuring acrobats, dancers, jugglers, musicians and actors from around the world. "Parade" is the centrepiece of the event, with Brussels Theatre Attrape leading dancers, circus performers, percussionists and a fireworks display through the city. Check website for venues and dates.

The full programme of summer events and attractions is at www.toerisme-oostende.be.



Years' War.

In the 19th century, Napoleon built a fort and named it after himself. It was planned as the base of operations for his planned invasion of Britain – but the Emperor was thwarted by his defeat at Waterloo before plans could get underway. Ostend also played a role in both World Wars, with the

British attempting to block access to the port in 1918 and again during the Second World War. The Ostend Casino, which had attracted royalty and aristocrats from around the world, was gutted of its art nouveau splendour by the Nazis to make way for a concrete bunker.

In between spates of turbulence

were also periods when Ostend's allure rose. "Up until the Sixties, people would only come here in the summer," says native Henri Mille. "Today, hotels are booked throughout the year."

Mille works as a nature guide at the Marien Ecologisch Centrum (Langestraat 99, www.marineco-center.be), founded 25 years ago to raise awareness of environmental dangers to the coast and wildlife and now a member of the World Wildlife Federation. "Every year, 1,000 to 1,200 dead guillemots wash up on the coast," says Mille. "And for every bird washed up, we calculate nine others are drowned at sea." The Marien Centrum also runs a bird rescue centre for those

that survive and provides sea classes for schools and groups. Its aim is to bring the public in contact with nature, and increase pressure on the authorities to introduce conservation measures.

For those wanting a bit more glitz, the city's Casino (Monacoplein, www.kursaalooostende.be) is still a hotspot – only nowadays the crowd is dominated by local residents attracted to the concerts, plays, and other events – such as dance spectacle Stomp! (the last week of August) and Peking Acrobats (late December).

For art lovers, Ostend has two special attractions. The PMMK, Provinciaal Museum voor Moderne Kunst (Romestraat 11,

www.pmmk.be) is a five-level museum devoted to modern and contemporary works housed in a former department store. Currently on exhibit are works by Georges Vantongerloo, a largely forgotten Antwerp-born sculptor/designer who played a key role in the De Stijl movement of the early 20th century. The permanent collection has some interesting paintings by Léon Spilliaert, a Belgian surrealist who depicted Ostend as a melancholy and slightly sinister place. But you can escape from the *fin de siècle* gloom in the museum's café, where modest food – sandwiches or homemade apple pie – is served in a Fifties atmosphere.

Screens on the sea

Ostend has joined the list of cities with film festivals that offer the public something more than Hollywood blockbuster fare. On August 28, the second edition of Filmfestival Oostende kicks off at the city's Kinepolis multiplex cinema. The event will be bookended by brothers: the Dardenne Brothers, Belgium's two-time Cannes Film Festival winners, will preside over the August 27 opening with the debut of Ari Folman's *Waltz with Bashir*, while the fest closes on September 6 with the premiere of *Burn after Reading*, the latest film by the Oscar-winning Coen Brothers starring Brad Pitt.

The programme of screenings and exhibitions is divided into five themes: previews, Pop & Rock, the Master's Selection, TV series and XL computer gaming (where new versions of legendary games will be unveiled by game developers, who will conduct Q&A sessions with students about game development). For nostalgic Brits, the TV Series includes some of the best of British television programmes from the past. The fest also includes a Belgian Day, with movers and shakers in the country's film industry participating in public forums to discuss the state of Belgian cinema.

The programme was assembled by Tom Barman, leader of the groundbreaking Belgian rock band dEUS, who has more recently turned his hand to film directing (such as the 2003 hit *Any Way the Wind Blows*). Barman and the festival organisers are still trying to nail down participants, but the full programme will be available online in early August.

online
www.filmfestivalooostende.be

Where to eat

For food lovers wanting something upmarket, the Ostend Queen (Monacoplein) at the Casino Kursaal serves French cuisine prepared by Pierre Wynants, the chef who created Brussels' landmark Comme Chez Soi. But if you're looking to spend less, the stands selling freshly fried fish, pickled herring and other fresh seafood on the Visserkaai are the best places to pick up a dinner for two. For those wanting a decent restaurant, try one of the establishments on the Visserkaai restaurants. They have to be good to stand up to the competition.



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Royal Music Conservatory
Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37

Get your tickets now for...



Venus and Adonis

8 August, 20.00. Concertgebouw, 't Zand 34, Bruges.
Tickets from 070.22.50.05 or
www.tinck.be

What was the first English opera? Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*? Or was it rather John Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, an adorable miniature from 1682 which, although much less well-known today than Purcell's later masterpiece, may well have served as a model for it? A sophisticated court masque with rapturous duets and a few delightfully silly scenes – including one in which a group of infant cupids receive a spelling lesson – the work is one of the highlights of the MAFestival, the Bruges part of the Festival of Flanders. The general theme this year is 'Politics and power in English early music', and Blow's work couldn't be more spot on: its first airing, at Charles II's court, starred the king's mistress Moll Davies as Venus and their nine-year-old illegitimate daughter as Cupid. Korean soprano Sunhae Im appears here as the goddess of love, Norwegian baritone Johannes Weisser as the infatuated Adonis and young South African counter-tenor Christopher Ainslie as the mischievous boy with the bow and arrow. The score will be performed by Belgian ensemble B'Rock and British choir Stile Antico under conductor Gary Cooper. Other concerts to look forward to – and for which tickets should be bought without delay – include a harpsichord recital by Richard Egarr (August 6) and deliciously gloomy songs by John Dowland and his contemporaries, performed by British tenor Julian Podger and Belgian lutenist Wim Maesele (August 3). See www.mafestival.be for more details.

JULY 25 12.15 Sara Picavet, piano
JULY 31 Tomoko Taguchi, soprano; Philippe Riga, piano: Debussy, Berg, Poulenc

Bruges

MaZ
Magdalenastraat 27; 050.33.20.14
JULY 31-AUG 1 20.00 The Magic Flute by Mozart with the Charlemagne Orchestra, conducted by Bartholomeus-Henri Van de Velde; staged by David Paul

Knokke

Heilig Hart Kerk
Dumortierlaan
JULY 23 20.30 The Halle Youth Orchestra

Leuven

30CC-Wagehuys
Brusselsestraat 63, www.30CC.be
Concerts at 12.15:
JULY 24 Valérie Vervoort, soprano; Eliot Lawson, viola; Jill Lawson, piano: Saint-Saens, Massenet, Offenbach, Tosti, Liedereren

Sint-Pieterskerk

Grote Markt
Concerts at 12.15:
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
Karperbrug 7; 02.502.46.99,
www.cafebizon.com
JULY 28 Madé J.

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
Concerts at 20.30:
Until JULY 26 20.45 Vincent Mardens Quartet
JULY 31-AUG 2 Jasmine Nelson Quartet

Antwerp

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

Ghent

Hotsy Totsy
Hoogstraat 1; 09.224.20.12,
www.hotsytotsy.be
JULY 25 23.00 Bulsjivism meets Bruno Deneckere

The Lazy River Jazz Club

Stadhuissteeg 5; 09.230.41.39,
www.lazyriverjazzclubgent.be
Concerts at 20.30:
JULY 25 Boogie Phil & The Boogie Woogie Band
JULY 26 The New Orleans Jazz Friends

Hoboken

Park Broydenborg
Broydenborg
JULY 30 20.30 Sonbacan

Pop, rock, hip-hop, soul

Brussels

Maison du Peuple
Sint-Gillisvoorplein 37-39;
www.muzeekpublique.be
JULY 30 19.30 Jean Yves Evrard (guitar); Eric Thielemans (drums)

Antwerp

Het Oude Badhuis
Stuivenbergplein 38, 03.272.31.40,
www.hetoudebadhuis.be
JULY 23 18.00 The Dump Brothers: acoustic, New Orleans blues rockabilly

Deurne

Openluchttheater Rivierenhof
Turnhoutsebaan 232; 070.222.192,
www.openluchttheater.be
Concerts at 20.30:
JULY 24 FrancoisD + Jo Lemaire
JULY 31 The Valerie Solanas + Guido

Belcanto, Vitalski, Lady Angelina & Martin Jansen

Hoboken

Park Broydenborg
Broydenborg
JULY 23 20.30 De Purperen Heidenen with Philippe Robrecht

Wachtebeke

Provinciaal Domein Puyenbroeck
Puyenbrug 1 A; 09.343.42.42
JULY 27 14.30 Will Tura, Freddy Breck and Astrid

World, folk

L'Alphabet

Waversesteenweg 1387; 02.662.23.00
JULY 25 20.30 Salsa night

Live Music Café

Anspachlaan 90-92 ,
www.live-music-cafe.be
Concerts at 22.00:
Until AUG 21 Dju-Bebe
Until AUG 27 Pucho (Cuba)
Until AUG 30 Kalema and K-Tribe

Dance

Ostend

Kursaal (Casino)
Monacoplein; 0900.69.900,
www.musichall.be
JULY 25-26 20.00 **JULY 27** 15.00 Fame, dance musical (in Dutch)

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, Anacleto Borgui and Marcel Hecquet

Atomium

Atomium Square; 02.475.47.72,
www.atomium.be
Until OCT 19 Expo 58: Between Utopia and Reality, documents, plans, objects, films, photographs and scale models of Expo 58
Until OCT 19 Lucien De 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 about World Fairs (near the Atomium on Louis Steensplein)

Belgian Comic Strip Centre

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80,
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
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
Until SEP 19 Documents on the

gardens designed by René Pechère and Jacques Boulanger-Français 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 Architectuurmuseum

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

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.fondationpoularchitecture.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 Ahl and Felix Dobbert (part of the Summer of Photography)

ING Cultural Centre

Koningsplein 6; 02.547.22.92
Until AUG 8 21st Century Portraiture and Landscape, recent work by 15 contemporary French photographers

ISELP

Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70
Until AUG 16 N'oubliez 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

Minimenstraat 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 of 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, exhibition of sculpture by Alexandre Charpentier and a selection from the museum's extensive collection of posters by Toulouse-Lautrec, among other fin-de-siècle works

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 of Photography)

Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11,
www.fine-arts-museum.be
Until AUG 31 Plecnik Project, life and professional achievements of Slovene architect Joze Plecnik (1872-1957)
Until SEP 21 The British Royal Collection: From Bruegel to Rubens, more than 50 paintings from the Queen Elizabeth II's collection, with major works by Hans Memling, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Peter Paul Rubens and others, shown alongside masterpieces from the museum's collection
Until SEP 21 Expo '58: Contemporary Art at the World Fair, revisiting the 1958 exhibition 50 Years of Modern Art

Royal Museum for Central Africa

Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11
Until AUG 31 Knock on Wood! Forest and Wood in Africa, thematic exhibition on African trees and forests and their need for sustainable management
Until SEP 28 Naabas Traditional Chiefs of Burkina Faso, outdoor exhibition of large-scale photographs by Jean-Dominique Burton (part of the Summer of Photography)
Until OCT 19 Expo 58, films and photographs, ethnographic objects, plants, artwork and animals that were displayed in the seven pavilions dedicated to the Belgian Congo at Brussels' World's Fair in 1958

Stadhuis

Grote Markt; 02.279.43.50
Until SEP 28 Oriental Fascination, Japanese etchings from the Feliks Jasienski collection in Krakow, shown alongside works by 19th and 20th-century Belgian artists influenced by Japanese graphic art, including Fernand Khnopff, Théo Van Rysselberghe, Rik Wouters and Henry Van de Velde

WIELS

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

Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum (MuHKA)

Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60
Until AUG 17 Die Lucky Bush, contemporary art show curated by Imogen Stidworthy, questioning the physical and social impact of language, with works by John Cage, Jimmie Durham, Gary Hill, Aglaia Konrad and Michelangelo Pistoletto
Until AUG 31 Visual art and sound installations by British artist and composer Cornelius Cardew

Until SEP 9 Fantasy, intervention by Koen van den Broek

Extra City
Tulpstraat 79; 0484.42.10.70
Until JULY 27 Blow Job, site-specific installation by Berlin-based Peter Friedl

Fotomuseum
Waalse Kaai 47; 03.242.93.00
Until SEP 14 Focus on sports, a selection of the best sports photographs from the Belga agency (part of the Summer of Photography)
Until SEP 14 Guy Bourdin, 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 Ledoulx, 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 (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 Homage 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
Until 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 Alambfleurics, 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 (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 World War One
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, open to everyone with a pair of blades
www.belgiumrollers.com

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

Brussels
Brussels Beach: Beach on the banks of the canal, with sand, palm trees, deckchairs for hire, beach sports and entertainment for all the family
Until AUG 17 at Saintelettesquare
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 Rode Klooster,

Auderghem
02.223.46.75, www.atelirdolcevita.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 funfair stretching along the boulevard from Hallepoort to the end of Zuidlaan
Until 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 Miniemen, Miniemenstraat 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
Until AUG 16 at Mini-Europe, Bruparck, at the foot of the Atomium
www.minieurope.com

Recyclart Holidays: Indoor and outdoor concerts, exhibitions, market and DJs
JULY 25 18.00 at Recyclart, Ursulinenstraat 25
02.502.57.34, www.recyclart.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 participating in gala performances and concerts
Until AUG 2 in the Concertgebouw and the Magdalenazaal Theater
www.intermezzofoundation.org

Klinkers 2008: Global festival of music, dance and outdoor film. World musicians include Olodium, Amparanoia, Milow, Melingo, Roy Paci. Benenwork 'Ballroom Brugeoise' is a free dance event at locations in the city centre
UNTIL AUG 9 in Bruges; www.klinkers-brugge.be

MAfestival – Festival of Flanders
AUG 1-9 The Bruges leg of the festival explores 16th- and 17th-century English music and its relationship to contemporary politics. It includes Hark! – a mini-festival on **AUG 3** in venues across the city
050.33.22.83, www.mafestival.be

Geluwe
Nachten van de Jukte: Music, DJs and comedians including Koen Buyse (Zornik) Solo, Raymond van het Groenewoud, Nid & Sancy, The Violent Husbands, Fredo & Thang, Mr. Vain en Raf Coppens
JULY 25-27 at Festivalterrein Geluwe, Stokstraat 4
www.nachtenvandejukte.be

Ghent
10 Days Off: Festival of electronic music and visual and sonic art

Don't miss this week



Het kind dat...
Until 24 August, Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays at 19.00, weekends at 17.00, also 6 and 20 August at 19.00, Ledeganckkaai, Antwerp South (near the Bank Van Breda). Tickets from 070.69.06.80, www.zva.be

Quirky and spellbinding circus show featuring a puppeteer, an acrobat, a tightrope walker and an opera singer, all performing within inches of the public in a tiny blue tent. Dispensing with words, narrative and even the spectacular antics usually associated with the genre, the show is the latest work of francophone Belgian troupe Théâtre d'un Jour. It was inspired by the childhood of Jephann de Villiers, an eccentric French artist now based in Brussels whose work mostly consists of strange, staring figurines made of bits of bark, moss and other half-decomposed materials gathered during walks in the Zoniënwood. A moving ode to transience and the fantasy world of children, *The Child That ...* is being shown in Antwerp throughout the summer as part of the Zomer Van Antwerpen festival. You've never seen anything quite like it.

Until JULY 28 at Vooruit, Sint Pietersnieuwstraat 23 and SMAK, Citadelpark
www.10daysoff.be

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

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

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

Kalmthout
Bogerfeesten: Music festival with Venae en Hellcrawlers, Triggerfinger, De Mens, Gerrie Herrie, Spring, Discobar Galaxie, folk games, children's entertainment, barbecue, Tecktonic and breakdance, Smells like the 90's party
JULY 25-27 at Marktpllein, Dorpsstraat 1

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

Mariakerke (Ghent)
Parkkaffee: Music, shows and children's entertainment in the park

Until AUG 31 at Parkkaffee, Groenestaakstraat 37
09.227.99.94, www.parkkaffee.be

Ostend
Theater aan Zee: Festival of music and theatre featuring playwright and director Arne Sierens and musician Gabriel Rios. Each will present old and new work and invite other artists to this platform for emerging theatrical and musical talent in Flanders and the Netherlands. The festival also includes street theatre, family activities and children's entertainment
Until AUG 9 in the city of Ostend; www.theateraanzee.be

Tienen
Suikerrock: Rock festival with a line-up that includes Lauryn Hiil, Suzanne Vega, Daan, Krezip.
JULY 25-27 on the Grote Markt
www.suikerrock.be

Turnhout
Turnhoutse VRIJ-dagen: Free music festival with Don McLean, Soulsister, Ketnet Band, Helmut Lotti and special guests
Fridays until AUG 29 20.30 (kids' programme from 15.30) on the Grote Markt
www.turnhoutsevrijdagen.be

Waregem
Gothic Festival 2008: VNV Nation (exclusive Benelux festival show), Clan of Xymox, Absolute Body Control, Combichrist, The Neon Judgement, Trisomie 21, Sonar, Reaper, Spectra*Paris, Garden Of Delight...
JULY 25-27 at Waregem Expo, Zuiderlaan 20
www.gothicfestival.be

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

INTERVIEW

Murielle Scherre

Murielle Scherre is the woman behind the cult lingerie brand La Fille d'O. She talks candidly to *Flanders Today* about lingerie, shoes and sexuality.

The original inspiration for La Fille d'O was the erotic novel L'Histoire d'O, and your brand quickly became known for its open approach to feminine sexuality, without taboos. Is this still the case?

The inspiration for my brand was never just that, but it's still what motivates me. Taboos are socially-constructed feelings of shame; they're not natural. I don't like the hypocrisy in today's businesses. Some cosmetics brands might display chubby women but they are still trying to sell them products to combat cellulite. I try to make a brand that reflects human feelings: doubts, fun and mischief. And you always know who is behind it: a human being, not a machine.

La Fille d'O is not a normal fashion company. You're not forced to produce two collections a year, and don't have to endlessly expand to put your collection in every lingerie shop imaginable. Is that a conscious choice?

Yes definitely! I don't believe in the system. I know what I'd like to see in shops myself, so I discard the rules when I feel the need and try to find other solutions. If they work, fantastic. If they don't, I just keep looking for new ones. I'd like to figure out a new system with which I can be happy, as well as my customers. I don't like to picture myself in an ivory tower waving to the common folks and throwing down some panties once in a while! I don't get the high-profile status of some designers. It's about what you do, right? Not about how your hair looks or something.

Is your collection still produced in Flanders?

Certainly, and it will be for a long time to come. It's costing me an arm and a leg, so customers have to pay more as well. But at least I can tell them with a clear conscience no foreign 14-year-olds have been slaving over my lingerie. Every single piece was made by healthy adult Flemish women who put their heart and soul into their work. They have been doing this kind of work for over thirty years, which is something no cheap factory in the Far East can rival. I find it extremely important to produce sustainable and durable lingerie. If something isn't good any more, customers can mail me and I will try to fix it.

You recently added a collection of shoes to your brand. Was that something you had been planning for a long time?

I've always had a soft spot for lingerie and shoes. So when I received an e-mail from Ciao! Ragazzi asking me if we could do a shoe collection together, I didn't hesitate. It seemed like a fabulous plan, so I made time for it. Shoes balance your body so that you walk and behave differently. Shoes can truly liberate you, and that is exactly the feeling I tried to achieve with my own designs. They can stimulate you to cross borders.

Are you a shoe addict yourself?

I really have too many pairs to count, and even so I still experience moments when I think: "No, the shoes I'm looking for are not there." Which is why making them myself is extra fun. Most of all, I pay attention to the details. The



curve of the last, the way a heel turns into the last and the quality of the materials. A shoe should direct the attention to the beauty of your foot. When you achieve the perfect match, it creates a special mood.

At the launch of your shoe collection, the DeVilles Harem Girls put on a special show. What is their link to La Fille d'O?

The DeVilles girls already existed, I just gave them a name. They're all women who hate rules and hate being labelled. They have had to fight unrealistic beauty ideals and they want to share that struggle with other women. They are looking for a new definition of what is sexy. After feminism, a-sexual grunge and androgyny, women

no longer know what's permitted and what's not. They have to find a balance. I think that is also why burlesque is so popular these days. People are tired of plastic boobs, they are looking for real glamour. After years of photoshopping, burlesque also offers women a chance to be themselves again.

You also started writing a column in a popular women's magazine in which you talk uninhibitedly about sex. Do you think Flanders needed that kind of column?

I have no idea whether Flemish women need it. Sometimes I think to myself, why should people want to read my ideas about masturbating? Didn't we go over that already? But it seems

not, because I've received quite a lot of positive emails. People have been confronted with vibrators and cheap sex for such a long time, they are ready to read and talk about the more trivial stuff, like kissing. And they appreciate my approach: offering a different point of view without being didactic or judgemental. Sometimes I meet people who get really emotional when they see me. They tell me I've had such an impact on their relationship, something they hadn't expected from the girl behind a lingerie brand.

Do you see it as your mission to free the Flemish women from taboos?

I don't see myself as a Messiah and I don't think I know better. It's more that I feel like I should use my candid and open nature for a good cause. Instead of belittling other people in order to feel secure yourself, it's better to make a difference and help other people. Everyone is concerned about their ecological footprint nowadays, but maybe we should also consider our emotional footprint. I know that the people I meet in life have a tremendous impact on me. I think it's my duty to do the same. I don't want to play it cool.

What do you think about this kind of 'cult' that you have inspired?

It's very strange. I find it difficult to grasp the reality of that cult-like phenomenon. I do love feedback though, no matter whether it's good or bad. It helps me learn which way to go in future. As a person, I am flattered by certain reactions, but I think it is more important that I get satisfaction from what I'm doing. If I can also offer other people satisfaction, I am truly happy.

Interview by Stéphanie Duval

online
www.lafilledo.com

THE LAST WORD

what they're saying about the government crisis in the Flemish press

[Leterme] never gave the impression of having a grasp of matters. He ran up against the persistent 'non' of the French-speakers. Could another prime minister have avoided this crisis? No. The political impasse is the result of a Belgian system that no longer functions.

Peter De Backer
Het Nieuwsblad

At the negotiating table there is no good will to be seen. That is why after 56 weeks the negotiations have got nowhere. It is 0-0: the Flemish parties have given nothing away, but they have gained nothing either. That was what the French-speakers wanted. Therefore this federal state is not in a position to reform itself. And it is heading for the edge of the precipice.

Guy Tegenbos
De Standaard

Leterme kept none of his promises, broke his word repeatedly, and was never able to show an inkling of good management. All that remains for him is the role of martyr to a crisis which he called down upon himself.

Yves Desmet
De Morgen

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