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Raoul Servais' *Taxandria*

Revolution in a cigar box

A new book and an honorary degree mark the 80th year of Flanders' master animator

Raoul Servais, the grand old man of Belgian animation, will be honoured next month during the Ghent International Film Festival. Appropriately

enough, this comes in the form of an honorary degree from the city's university, recognising his contribution both to the art and the teaching of animation in Flanders.

"He was revolutionary in form – because he was far, far ahead of other people working in animation films – but also in content," explains Luc Deneulin of Brussels

Free University (VUB). "His political views, which were not that linked to the times, still have a message today."

Continued on page 3



Business

While the construction industry is in the doldrums elsewhere in Europe and the US, business is booming in Flanders, as more construction permits are issued and house prices continue to creep up.

Active

The Gordel is expected to draw some 80,000 cyclists and walkers to the Flemish fringes of Brussels this Sunday. It used to a political event, but now it's billed as a fitness day for the whole family.

Interview

Archaeologist Marc Waelkens of Leuven University has been working for the past 18 years on the site of an ancient Roman city in southwest Turkey. The past few weeks have produced some exciting finds.

School renovation programme on hold

Children's activities suffer from spending cap

Alan Hope

As the country's children this week went back to school after the summer holidays, the principals of 211 schools in Flanders were still waiting for news of new financing promised more than two years ago. The money is part of a €1 billion package agreed in 2006 which would help reduce the backlog of investment in building and renovation of schools. At present, the most pressing cases would require investment of €1.9 billion.

The government's plan was to install a public-private partnership (PPP) in which

renovation of schools would be handled by a new agency and a private partner. A first tranche of 211 urgent cases for investment was drawn up. But more than two years down the line, the private partner has still not been identified, and the whole project is on hold.

Three consortia have submitted offers setting out the terms of their cooperation: Fortis Bank and Fortis Real Estate; Cofinimmo and Gemeentelijke Holding; and Barclays Capital, Meridian Infrastructure and NIB Capital. A consortium involving

Continued on page 5

EDITOR'S NOTES

Use-It

Something strange happened in Brussels this summer. The weather was awful, one grey day after another – but the city's youth hostels were constantly full. It seems as if Brussels, once considered a dull bureaucratic city, has suddenly become one of Europe's hip destinations.

And it's not just Brussels. Other Flemish cities are increasingly popular with young travellers, as well. They come for the summer festivals, the cafés and the laid-back nightlife. Forget Barcelona or Berlin. This is the place to be.

It helps that young people can pick up free city maps that point them in the direction of the fun. They are produced by the alternative tourism organisation Use-It and left lying around the places where backpackers are likely to pass, like bars and music venues and record shops.

The maps are crammed with just the sort of information that 20-something travellers need, such as locations of internet cafes, launderettes and bike rentals. They also pinpoint interesting shops, offbeat sights and places where you can pick up cheap food. Throw in the odd picnic spot, beautiful tree or odd urban detail and you have a complete city guide.

The maps are accompanied by quirky descriptions of various

locations and funny snippets of local gossip. On the Ghent map, one Use-It contributor notes, "Ghent will never be a snobby place because the fancy ladies break their high heels on the cobblestones."

The maps don't dwell too long on the standard tourist sites, but they sometimes have an unexpected insight to offer on a familiar place. The Use-It team observes that there are two buildings in Ghent that look exactly the same. The House of the Bricklayers on the Graslei was built in 1913 using the plans of a 16th-century house that everyone thought had been demolished – then the original was discovered hidden behind a wall and restored to its original state.

The instructions on kissing are particularly fun. "One kiss is for friends, three kisses are for birthdays, for New Year and for old grannies you hardly ever see. Two kisses: never. We never kiss someone we've never seen before, but it's quite normal to kiss the girls after just one night out." So now you know.

Derek Blyth

online

www.use-it.be



Seeing double: the original House of the Bricklayers, which has a twin on the Graslei

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FACE OF FLANDERS



TALKING DUTCH

notes on language



uitgeschakeld

Part of the perfect holiday is avoiding newspapers and television. So after a fortnight of enforced ignorance in foreign parts, I returned to find a pile of newspapers that David, who's been feeding our cats, had stacked on the kitchen table. To ease the slow return to the real world, I've been glancing at some old headlines to see what the world has been up to.

As I read *Vrees voor grote oorlog in Georgië* – Fear of great war in Georgia, I felt the past 20 years evaporating. What has been going on? *Russische tanks rolden gisteren Zuid-Ossetië binnen. Grote vraag is hoe de VS zullen reageren* – The big question is how the US will react. I stretch for the atlas to find out where South Ossetia is.

What else has been happening? *Chaos op Brussels Airport*. Well, you could have put money on that happening. Was it the baggage handlers or the air-traffic controllers?

Now this looks suspiciously chauvinistic: *Zwemmen in zee gevaarlijk in Nederland, niet bij ons* – Swimming in the sea is dangerous in the Netherlands but not here with us. No, sorry, they're right; it is all to do with *de harde zuidwestenwind*.

Here's something that appeared recently in this column: *Vluchtmisdrijf vaker bestraft* – Hit-and-run crimes punished more often.

Buitenlandse bestuurders ontsnappen niet meer aan een veroordeling wegens een vluchtmisdrijf – Foreign drivers no longer escape a sentence for hit-and-run crimes. I managed to miss the first 10 days of the Olympics, so I was shocked to read a headline about Belgium's ace sprinter, Kim Gevaert.

Kim komt dinsdag op de Olympische Spelen in Peking niet in actie op de 200 meter – Kim will not "come into action" in the 200 metres on Tuesday at the Olympic Games.

Now this is serious stuff. *Gevaert, die zondag uitgeschakeld werd in de halve finales van de 100 meter, heeft terug last van haar achillespezen*. Ze wil wel nog de 4x100 meter lopen. So she was knocked out of the semi-finals of the 100 metres on Sunday because of a recurring Achilles tendon problem. But she will be running in the 4x100 metres.

At this point I linger on the word *uitgeschakeld*. *Een schakel* is a link. So, for instance, *de ontbrekende schakel* is the missing link. *Uitschakelen* can mean to switch off a light. But in Kim's case *uitgeschakeld worden* means to be eliminated or knocked out of a competition.

It's funny how words in another language take on a stronger meaning: for me *uitschakelen* feels so much more brutal than eliminate or knock out, yet the English words are equally so. And this is half the fun of learning another language: foreign words seem much more vibrant than the words you've grown so used to.

Anyway, my holiday has left me feeling slightly *uitgeschakeld*. Time to catch up on the news. And I mustn't forget David's cats.

Alistair MacLean

online

www.vandale.be

FEATURE



At home in Flanders: Raoul Servais founded the first school of animation in Europe

Animation revolution

Continued from page 1

And although his films often have an international feel, there is a fascinating relationship between Servais' work and Belgian painters such as the Flemish expressionist Constant Permeke and surrealist Paul Delvaux.

Deneulin and his colleague Johan Swinnen recently published a book on Servais, built around a long interview with the director and lavishly illustrated with images from his films and his life. The most recent photographs, shot by Swinnen, show the now 80-year-old Servais at home in Flanders and visiting some of the landscapes that inspired his films.

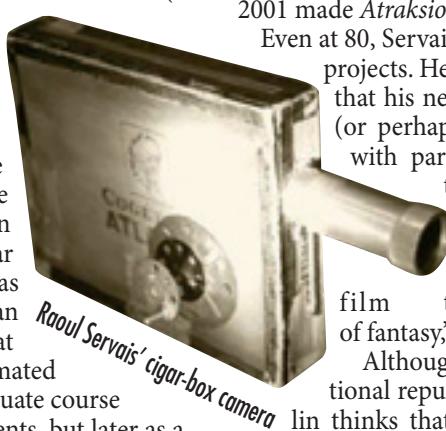
Born in 1928 in Ostend, there were no handbooks to guide him. And animation companies in Belgium and France jealously guarded their secrets. Servais taught himself animation, working at one point with a camera made out of a cigar box (helpfully cobbled together by one of his teachers).

"I had to discover everything for myself,"

he told the book's authors. "Looking back, I admit it was fun to invent something that already existed. But then, how much time have I lost searching?"

His first films, one live-action and one animated, were made in the late 1950s and early 1960s but Servais is not happy about showing them. The earliest film he allows to be seen in its entirety is *De Valse Noot* (*The False Note*) from 1963.

By this time he had become a lecturer in the decorative arts at the Koninklijke Academie voor Schone Kunsten (KASK), the academy of fine arts in Ghent. The same year that *De Valse Noot* was completed, he set up an independent section at KASK teaching animated film, first as a post-graduate course for decorative arts students, but later as a discipline in its own right.



Kino-Metro (or the film arriving at platform two...)

There's one Raoul Servais film that you won't find on the internet. Instead, it plays every day in the Brussels metro. The walls of Houba-Brugmann station are decorated with images devised by Servais and executed by Pierre Vlerick, so that as the train pulls into and out of the station you get a short cinematic experience.

On one side of the tracks you see a woman standing in a group of passengers. As the frames progress, she stays in focus while the other passengers blur around her, and the colours from a bouquet of flowers she is holding smear across the "screen".

On the other side, the same woman moves from a walk to a run, the frames invaded by painted colours as she goes. On both sides, bands of steel run beneath the images, varying in thickness like the soundtrack on a strip of film.

Or at least that's how it should be. Unfortunately, whoever installed the panels has them both going the same way, whereas the trains arrive from opposite directions. This means that one "film" will always play backwards.

"It was the first school of its kind in Europe, and many of his students – the best – went to Hollywood," says Deneulin. Next to this, Servais went on to give courses at La Cambre in Brussels and Valenciennes in France. He was even invited to set up a school in Iran – an offer he declined.

Meanwhile, he continued to make films, winning critical success through the 1960s and 1970s at the Venice and Cannes film festivals with *Chromophobia*, *Operation X-70* and *Harpya*. While there are recurrent themes, such as an underdog character resisting big business or a totalitarian government, the graphic style is different every time. Sometimes it's close to collage, sometimes drawn like an editorial cartoon in a newspaper, sometimes like an etching or a watercolour.

This is partly down to changes in his artistic collaborators, but there is also a distinct feeling that Servais achieves what he wants to with each brief film and then moves on. In the interview with Deneulin and Swinnen, he confesses that by the end of the 1970s he was getting tired of cartoons and instead wanted to explore the boundaries between animation and live-action film.

At that time, the techniques for doing this were prohibitively expensive, so Servais once again had to become an inventor, or re-inventor. The first technique he developed produced *Harpya* in 1979, but it was laborious, and he went back to the drawing board.

Although he found a better method, which he called "Servaisgraphy," he was only able to use it partially in his next film to create drawn backgrounds. The feature-length *Taxandria* was plagued by difficulties with producers who disagreed with Servais about his approach and script. He had in mind an animated film based on live action, while they wanted (and got) a live action film with special effects. Although completed in 1994, *Taxandria* was not the film Servais wanted to make.

He was finally able to apply Servaisgraphy in *Nachtvlinders* in 1998, a short homage to Paul Delvaux. Ironically this was also the last time the technique was used, since advances in computer animation made it obsolete. Still, he embraced the new methods and in 2001 made *Atraksion* with computers.

Even at 80, Servais is still full of ideas and projects. He confided to the authors that his next film will be a feature (or perhaps a TV series) dealing with paranormal events during the First World War. It will be a live-action film with special effects. "It will be a film that belongs to the world of fantasy," he told them.

Although Servais' international reputation is secure, Deneulin thinks that he is under-valued at home. "When you see all the prizes he has got in other countries and the offers to work abroad...yet he has always remained faithful to Belgium. He really hasn't had the support to make other films nor the honours he deserves."

This may be because he does not identify exclusively with one or the other language community. "He wants to be a Belgian director," says Deneulin, "and I think such a time, unfortunately for him, is finished."

Raoul Servais: The Wizard of Ostend by Johan Swinnen and Luc Deneulin is published by ASP (www.aspeditions.be) in Dutch, French and English

online

www.raoulservais.be

Five essential Servais films

Chromophobia (1965)

A monochrome army invades a brightly coloured country, their guns turning everything black and white. But the soldiers are outwitted by a painter, a little girl with a watering can and a brightly coloured sprite. With a graphic style based on geometric shapes and solid line drawing, it's a fast, witty ode to joy and resistance.

To Speak or Not to Speak (1970)

A fable about how an artist's fine words are first exploited and then distorted by business and politicians, set out in a series of delicious ideas about cartoon speech bubbles.

Pegasus (1973)

A farmer mourns the passing of his old plough horse by building a metal replica of its head. However the image is more powerful than the farmer anticipates. A melancholy side of Servais' work, with a softer graphic style showing a debt to Flemish expressionist Constant Permeke.



Taxandria (1994)

Although far from his original intentions and bearing the scars of its tortured production history, Servais' only feature film is packed with fascinating ideas and intriguing images. A boy prince meets a mysterious lighthouse keeper who introduces him to Taxandria, a parallel world where machines are banned and everyone lives in the present. The film's backgrounds were designed by noted Belgian graphic artist François Schuiten, while the love story (resisted by Servais) was written by French novelist and filmmaker Alain Robbe-Grillet.

Nachtvlinders (1998)

A nocturnal butterfly flits through the paintings of Paul Delvaux, momentarily bringing his figures to life. The only film made entirely in "Servaisgraphy", *Nachtvlinders* shows the disorienting effect Servais was seeking at the intersection of live-action and animation.



Raoul Servais, Alle kortfilms, a DVD of the short films of Raoul Servais, can be ordered from Fnac or from Folioscope, 02.534.41.25, www.anima2009.eu

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School trips axed in spending clash

Continued from page 1

Dexia and KBC banks dropped out before the final stage.

The government now promises a decision "in the coming weeks". For the building industry, which will receive most of the €1 billion windfall, and for the schools themselves, however, no ground is likely to be broken until after the Flemish elections in June 2009.

Meanwhile, the new school year started with controversy over the Flemish government's policy of capping the spending that parents will be required to contribute to pay for primary school activities, such as day trips. The cap was introduced last year as a means of ensuring children from poorer homes were

not discriminated against because of their parents' inability to pay. It also meant that low-income parents would not have to face any surprise bills for out-of-school activities.

But according to a straw poll carried out last week by *De Morgen* newspaper, as many as half of all schools have cut out activities like day trips or swimming lessons in order to keep within the maximum bill. A working group on pre-school education found four in 10 schools had scrapped day trips, three in 10 had dropped swimming, and one in four had scrapped theatre activities.

Now Flemish budget minister Dirk Van Mechelen has called for the spending-cap to be revised a year earlier than was originally planned. If schools begin to cut back on traditional days out or swimming lessons, he said,

"something has to change".

Criticism of the spending-cap is rejected by education minister Frank Vandenbroucke. The maximum spending level per child has gone up this year from €422 to €695, he pointed out. Schools may be cancelling certain activities, but they should be honest with parents about the reasons and not blame it on the spending-cap, he said.

The principle of capping spending is particularly important, Vandenbroucke said, in pre-schools, where children are not obliged to attend. "We want all parents to send their children to pre-school," he said. "There is real poverty in Flanders, but pre-schoolers need to be free from the financial distress of their parents. That's why I want costs to be strictly controlled."

NEWS FLASH



Belgacom CEO Didier Bellens will stay in his post for a further six years, after he agreed to take a pay-cut of about one-third on his annual salary of around €1.8 million. The agreement brings to an end a period of uncertainty in which a firm of head-hunters was brought in to find a possible replacement, apparently without success. Bellens had been criticised by members of his own board of directors for his lack of strategy and his inability to improve Belgacom's place internationally. The dissident board members remain in place.

The number of **animals used in scientific experiments** last year rose by 23,000 to nearly 780,000, according to figures from the public health ministry. The increase is largely due to the high level of research carried out in this country into disease processes, the ministry said. The animals concerned were mainly used for the development of drugs and medical equipment and included 38 apes, down from 586 in 2004. Tests of cosmetic products on live animals are banned in Belgium and the use of primates in experiments is soon to be outlawed by new legislation. The number of dogs and cats used also fell.

The **next harvest of mussels** from the North Sea off Belgium's coast has been postponed until mid-September, it was announced. Mussels from beds operated by the Foundation for Sustainable Fisheries Development (SDVO) – one of only two production units in Belgian waters – were found to have insufficiently high meat content. Mussels from the other Flemish beds were removed from sale on 1 August by the federal food safety agency, though the producer was given a clean bill of health two weeks later.

The **former bishop of Hasselt**, Paul Schruers, died last weekend in a retirement home in Hasselt at the age of 78. Mgr Schruers had suffered a stroke in May and never fully recovered. In a statement, Cardinal Danneels said Mgr Schruers had carried out his mission with simplicity and a joy in life. The serving bishop of Hasselt, Patrick Hoogmartens, said he had lost a spiritual father.

Police in Sint-Truiden last week intervened to **stop a cock fight** after a tip from animal rights organisation Gaia. Seven living birds and one dead one were seized and two suspects detained. Cock fighting was banned in Belgium in 1929. Earlier this year, a Hasselt court fined five offenders €2,750 each for organising fights.

Firefighters remembered

Belga



A book of condolence has been opened in Ukkel town hall in memory of two firefighters who died battling a blaze in an abandoned sports complex

last weekend. Alain Tacqueniere, 58, was sent to the fire in a back-up engine from Anderlecht. He was due to go on early retirement next year. Patrick Batselier,

35, was deployed from the main fire-station in Helihavenlaan near North Station. Both men died when delays caused by a lack of water led to the build-up in the

building of a backdraft followed by a flash-over – an explosion and a sudden increase in temperature of hundreds of degrees.

The building was due for demolition to make way for an apartment complex. The abandoned halls were frequented by youths smoking joints, police said. It is not known how the fire started. The building had been empty for 15 years, and there was no trace of squatters rumoured to be established on the premises. "This is so senseless," commented fire chief Charles De Sneyder. Had it not been for water problems, the fire should easily have been brought under control by engines from the local Eikenbos station, making the presence of Helihavenlaan and Anderlecht engines unnecessary.

A woman firefighter also caught in the blast was treated for burns at the military hospital in Neder-over-Heembeek, and later allowed to go home. As *Flanders Today* went to press, a 16-year-old youth was reported to have turned himself in to police in connection with the fire.

Nationalists gather for annual pilgrimage

About 2,500 visitors turned up at the weekend for the annual IJzer Pilgrimage at the IJzertoren monument in Diksmuide. Among the crowd there to commemorate the Flemish dead of the First World War were minister-president Kris Peeters, with fellow ministers Geert Bourgeois, Hilde Crevits and Bert Anciaux. They heard Walter Baeten, chairman of the organising committee, call for an end to federal elections and for the fusion of Brussels and Flanders "with guarantees for French-speakers as a cultural minority". Flanders' strong economy could provide the answer to the material and social problems of the capital, Baeten said.

Elsewhere, Lennik mayor Willy De Waele has received death threats in response to his policy of refusing to fly the Belgian tricolour on official buildings. An anonymous group of protestors once again tried to hang a Belgian flag on the town hall, where only Flemish flags are now permitted.

Jean-Jacques Flahaux, mayor of the Walloon municipality of Braine-le-Comte, called De Waele's policy, which has the support of the whole council, "racist and fascist". He also made an offer to "all democratic Flemings" to come and live in Braine.

"You ought to see my mailbox and the reactions I've had from the French-speaking side," De Waele said. "I'm planning to publish them all. I don't get any police protection, and I haven't asked for any. My wife is afraid, but I'm not."



For the first time in 70 years, a Zeppelin airship flew through Belgian airspace last week on a trip from England via France to the Netherlands. The airship came down in Grimbergen, the first Zeppelin to land on Belgian soil since the First World War. The airship's arrival via Kortrijk, Ghent and northern Brussels was delayed because of weather conditions over the Channel. Among the 12 passengers was a descendant of Count Ferdinand Von Zeppelin. During its stop-over in Belgium, the airship took a number of members of the public for a short flight costing €269.

Sports schools score high with students

Belgium's athletes may have come back from Beijing with a meagre tally of Olympic medals, but the country's young people are far from discouraged. This coming year, enrollments at Flanders' six schools for top sporting performers rose by 18% to 662, with the registers still open. In Flanders, some 785 school students have the status of top sports performers, which allows them more flexibility in timetables and curricula in order to take account of training requirements. Some 56 of them are still at primary school level and study in a special school, while the rest are secondary school students.

The increase is mainly due to a new system put in place by the Football Union (KBVB), which from this year will operate a joint venture with schools in Leuven, Ghent and Bruges. With 268 students signed up, football is the most popular single sport at the schools, followed by basketball, swimming, volleyball and athletics. Primary school places are only available for gymnastics and tennis.

Students in the sports schools have 20 hours of normal lessons a week instead of the usual 32 hours, and 10 hours of training as well as the mandatory two hours of physical education. According to gymnastics trainer Gerrit Beltman, last week sacked as the trainer of Olympic hopeful Aagje Vanwallegem, class hours should be cut to 14 hours a week to allow more time for training, and the school career extended by two years to make up the difference.

Meanwhile a trainer at another top sports school in Leuven has called for the school system to scrap mandatory physical educa-



Gaëlle Mys, a student at the Ghent sports school

tion. According to Koen Hoeyberghs, compulsory PE is not the answer to Belgium's tepid performance in international competitions. Belgium needs to look at how other countries motivate and inspire young sporting talent, he said. For example, children could be allowed to choose for themselves how much time they spend on physical education. "If children like doing something, they have no trouble putting the effort in," he said.

Alfacam in talks with RTL?



Alfacam, a global leader in high-definition TV broadcasting equipment, is rumoured to be in talks with Europe's leading television company RTL to develop its activities in Flanders. Headquartered in Lint, near Antwerp, the company made a name for itself during the recent Olympic Games in Beijing when it shipped 22 production trucks from Italy to China to film the events and provided about two-thirds of all television images broadcast worldwide.

The company, which owns Europe's largest fleet of multi-camera TV broadcasting trucks, has built up an impressive track record in covering Olympic events. It was present at the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City, the 2004 Athens Olympics and the 2006 Turin Olympics. It has now signed major contracts for Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games and the 2012 Summer Olympics in London.

The fence company Betafence from Zwevegem also played a role in the Olympics. It delivered 250km of fencing to line motorways and surround the Olympic village. The company now hopes to secure a contract for the 2012 London Olympics.

Confusion surrounds new euthanasia law

Since 1 September, it is now possible to fill out a Living Will and register it with your local municipality, specifying that, in the event of any serious illness or injury that leads to you having to be maintained on life support, you choose to have your life terminated.

The new will was conceived at the time when euthanasia was legalised in 2002, but it took until 2003 before the form to be filled in was published in the government's official journal, and until April last year before the registration procedure was finalised.

The idea, still some way from being realised, is to link the will to the population register so that, in the event of an accident, medical authorities can see immediately if a will is in force for a particular patient. But staff at town halls are still not clear how the information is to be entered into the database. Doctors have yet to be notified about the procedure for consulting the records, and a brochure intended to explain the subject to the public is still being edited.

Above all, the contents of the will are very limited. Application is restricted to cases of "irreversible coma" – which excludes common circumstances leading to voluntary euthanasia, such as approaching dementia or intolerable pain.

Belgium and the Netherlands remain the only countries in the world with laws allowing euthanasia. Earlier this year, a French woman suffering from cancer wrote to President Nicolas Sarkozy to beg for a change in the law to allow her to die, but nothing came of it. She later committed physician-assisted suicide in Switzerland. The new Belgian will allows a future patient to request euthanasia from a doctor in the limited circumstances allowed, although the doctor is not obliged to comply. The will is in fact no more than a clear sign that the patient has specifically asked for euthanasia – a condition of the law as it stood previously. The will must be renewed every five years.

Of greater legal force, in that it must be complied with, is a so-called "negative will", in which are laid down the various procedures or treatments which must not be carried out in the event of severe illness or injury – anything from surgical interventions to artificial feeding and respiration.

BACK TO SCHOOL



Many of the one million or so children who this week went back to school are beginning the new year with jetlag caused by a growing tendency, particularly during holidays, for young people to stay up later and lie in bed longer. And, like jetlag, sleep deficiency needs time to get over: experts advise one full day of preparation for every hour earlier the child needs to get up. So if they've been lying in bed until noon and now need to get up at seven, they should have started preparing last week.

Shops which specialise in back-to-school supplies are disappearing, according to a poll carried out by the union for the self-employed (NSZ). This is allegedly due to a decision last year that all primary schools would provide ordinary supplies free of charge to pupils. And schools themselves bypass the retail sector when buying supplies. Only 15% of the shops questioned had a higher turnover last year than in 2006, while 63% said there was no longer any future in specialist school-supplies stores.

More students this year are signing up for courses in the exact sciences, ICT and engineering, according to a study carried out by technical federation Agoria. The survey looked at students enrolled in the universities of Ghent and Leuven, as well as higher education colleges in Antwerp, Ghent and Brussels. Science student enrolments went up by nearly 25%, engineering by 7% and ICT by 10%. But Belgian industry has a structural shortage of engineering and scientific graduates which the increases will not do much to tackle, Agoria said.

A Brussels court has ordered a Haitian mother to send her six-year-old daughter to a French-speaking school, despite the fact that the child has already spent three years in a Flemish pre-school. The court was ruling on a request by the child's biological father, also Haitian, to have her transferred. Neither of the parents speak Dutch, but the child's mother wanted her to learn Dutch at school to have the best chance of succeeding later in life, while speaking French at home.

Nearly one in four children between the ages of 10 and 15 has some kind of learning or behavioural disorder, according to a poll of 933 families carried out for *De Standaard* newspaper. Attention deficit disorder (ADD) is the most common problem cited, along with dyslexia, speech problems, autism and high intelligence (also considered a learning difficulty). Part of the reason for the numbers – higher than epidemiological studies have suggested – is an increased willingness of doctors to diagnose disorders like ADD.

Smoking in any part of a school premises, even outdoors, is illegal as of 1 September, when a new law came into force. Teachers, staff, visitors or students are banned from smoking inside the buildings, but they will also not be allowed to step outside on another part of school property. In addition, Flemish education minister Frank Vandenbroucke has made it clear that smoking rooms provided for staff will be phased out.

RETAIL

Faking it

Forced by a changing society to alter their product, Kamy Hat has become one of Europe's most respected labels in fake fur

Stéphanie Duval

In the 1920s, the textile factories in Flanders were thriving, and so was Kamy Hat. No chic Flemish woman was without a stylish hat from the company in Oudenaarde.

But in the 1960s, an abundance of cars and hairdressers made hats inconvenient, and the popularity dropped significantly. Kamy Hat was suddenly faced with changes in society that would force the company to either change or go out of business.

It chose to change. Edgar Haelter, the son of the owners, led a makeover of the organisation, which began producing hats and accessories in fake fur. It was a very unusual and innovative idea at the time and proved to be successful almost right away.

Today, Kamy Hat has become one of the world's leading companies producing fake fur and is still based in Oudenaarde, East Flanders. "We had to work with Belgian factories because other factories would force you to buy at least 500 metres of any fabric, which of course is too much when you are only producing hats," explains Christophe Goubau, the manager at Kamy Hat.

The company is now working with the same factory they started with 30 years ago. "They listen to our ideas, and they develop most of them," Goubau says. "It's



So many hats, so little time...Kamy Hat makes products that are more humane – and cheaper, too

a very close collaboration, based on mutual respect and trust." The cooperation furthermore allows Kamy Hat to be more flexible and offer a wide range of products.

"National as well as international clients are often astonished when they hear we still produce solely in Belgium. But they very much appreciate that fact," says Goubau. With Belgium as the sole production location and with Kamy Hat's fur being woven instead of knitted, high quality and exclusiveness are guaranteed.

"We were obligated to create this kind of niche for ourselves if we wanted to be able to compete with factories in the UK," says Goubau. Since there was a lot of competition in the market of real fur, faux fur seemed like the perfect prod-

uct for Kamy Hat. It was a much more democratic fashion accessory that quickly rivalled its "real" counterpart in popularity.

"We didn't start the business with environmental issues on our minds, as that mentality hadn't really surfaced yet in those years," notes Goubau. "But lately we've come to notice large warehouses' desire to be politically correct."

But real fur hasn't disappeared just yet. Goubau says that the cost of real fur is coming down and there is a lot more of the less expensive varieties available than 10 years ago. "I get the feeling people tend to shop according to their desire to save money more than to save the environment."

Still, this hasn't stopped Kamy Hat from becoming extremely

popular all over the world. The brand's faux fur hats are for sale all over Europe and around the globe, from Tokyo to the United States. "We visit fairs to meet with our international clients, but we also travel to them, and we have agents representing us in different countries," says Goubau.

An international presence is one of the reasons why Kamy Hat can continue to produce in Belgium. "We are only able to remain a 100% Belgian company as long as we can keep expanding our international market," says Goubau. "Of course there are limits to that expansion, but luckily we haven't met them yet."

online
www.kamyhat.be

BUSINESS FLASH



Deme and De Nul

Deme and De Nul, Flanders leading dredging companies, have won the €482 million Amoras contract to dredge accumulated silt and maintain the Antwerp port area for the next 15 years. The Scheldt River and its tributaries accumulate some 500,000 tonnes of silt a year, which hampers the port's traffic.

KBC Bank

Flanders largest financial institution is negotiating to sell its 30.6% stake in the Slovenian Nova Ljubljanska Banca for up to €900 million to the British Apax investment fund. KBC had hoped to be able to gain control of the bank, but the Slovenian authorities blocked the deal. KBC has operations in Russia, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Hungary and plans to develop its activities in Central and Eastern Europe.

Electrabel

The country's leading energy company is seeking licenses to build two wind farms off Knokke on the North Sea coast. One would be on Blight sand bank some 60km offshore, while the other would be a mere 20km from land. The projects would compete with proposals by other electricity suppliers. A decision on the selected projects is expected within one year.

Curves

Curves, the US-based fitness clubs group, will open its first local franchise in Herentals, near Antwerp, in early October. The company already operates over 40 clubs in the Netherlands and will compete with the Belgian market leader Passage Fitness First.

Louis de Waele

Louis De Waele, the Brussels-based property group, has been sold to the French Rabot Dutilleul for an undisclosed amount.

Flemish ports

Flemish ports had a bumper first half of the year with traffic growth of 8.1% for Antwerp, Europe's second largest haven, which shipped some to 96 million tonnes. The Port of Zeebrugge, which specialises in containers and cars, grew by 3.3%, while traffic at Ghent was 13.8% higher. All three benefitted from strikes in Le Havre, France's largest port.

Volvo Ghent

Volvo Ghent, the assembling affiliate of the Swedish automobile group, has been chosen to build the company's new S60 car from 2010. The Ghent-based factory already produces the S60 model, and unions feared that the worldwide slump in the car sector would reduce its chances of building the new vehicle.



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Construction industry calls for open door policy

Immigrant workers needed to fill 10,000 building jobs

Alan Hope

The Flemish Construction Confederation (VCB) has approached the Romanian embassy to ask for cooperation in attracting more construction workers from Eastern European countries in response to the chronic shortage of qualified workers in the industry.

Despite an influx of Polish workers before that country's entry into the EU, the industry is still facing a shortfall, with an estimated 10,000 more jobs than there are workers to fill them.

Last year, the industry took on 18,000 workers simply to coun-

ter the effects of natural wastage – the loss of workers to retirement or other employment. And that number is likely to be maintained every year for the foreseeable future, bringing the annual number of workers needed to 30,000. Many Poles who worked here in the black have gone back to their homeland, as wages there have increased since Poland joined the EU.

There are, it so happens, nearly that many unemployed building workers on the national register. But the VCB claims the vast majority of those are "unemployed on paper only". Just 7% of the total,



Building bricks: Wim Robberechts took this view of a new Flemish housing project

about 2,000 workers, are following the special retraining courses made available by the industry. The rest are not actively looking for work in the sector, the VCB said at a press conference. "A part of the population has settled down into unemployment," according to VCB director-general Robert de Muelenaeer.

The Flemish job-training agency said the confederation's figures were exaggerated, but the problem exists. Belgium's pool of available construction workers is too small, and not enough young people are

of the level available here.

Workers who join the black economy, however, do not pay taxes or social security, and because they are employed illegally, often face dangers onsite which legitimate contractors have to guard against, particularly in relation to health and safety. "There is no point in barring the door when the windows are standing open," de Muelenaere said.

term. The main cause for concern in the near future is the mortgage situation, with the credit crisis already pushing up the cost of a mortgage, moving some families out of reach of owning their own homes altogether.

House prices remain high

The credit crisis has so far failed to have any impact on Belgian house prices, according to the Federal Service for Economy. Whereas prices have slumped across the United States and in several European countries, they have continued to rise in Belgium. The average house cost some €169,972 at the end of July, a massive 8.1% increase on the figure six month earlier. The price of the average apartment rose by 5.5%, while increasingly-scarce building plots rose by 9.7%.

Most estate agents had expected house prices to remain steady in the first half of 2008. They were unable to explain the sharp price increase, given that prices have been falling or level across most of Europe.

Construction on the rise

Despite the inauspicious economic climate, housing construction in Flanders is on the rise, with 3.9% more new permits

rise, with 5.9% more new permits issued in the first four months of this year than the same period last year. From January to April, 5,647 new houses and 6,653 new apartments received building permits, not that much lower than the golden years of 2005 (6,330; 6,893) and 2006 (6,750; 9,131), particularly considering the pessimistic economic climate and the declining levels of business and consumer confidence.

Performance was also promising in the non-housing construction sector, the VCB said, while the investment programme of the Flemish region would also bring benefits to the sector in the longer

online
www.vch.be

events@ackroyd.be' is in red. At the very bottom, there are several logos for sponsors: AIS, JORA, BACCHUS BEVERAGES, map relocations, ING, Radisson, and PATS.com."/>

Lufthansa moves closer to Brussels Airlines takeover

Brussels Airlines, the Zaventem-based Belgian carrier formed out of the bankrupt national carrier Sabena, may be sold to Germany's Lufthansa. The German company is to acquire a 45% stake for €65 million, with an option to buy 100% within two years.



The airline's share-holders are keen to join one the leading alliances to ensure the company's survival. Only two contenders were in the running to take over the company – British Airways, part of the Oneworld alliance, and Lufthansa, the key player in the Star Alliance.

EXHIBITION

Brave new world

The fourth exhibition of human “plastinates” is no less fascinating, but the original mission is beginning to look murky



Body of evidence: but is it moral?

Lisa Bradshaw

Forty years ago, a young man named Gunther von Hagens was arrested for attempting to flee East Germany. He was detained in a Bratislava jail, and a sympathetic Czech official gave him the chance to escape. Von Hagens was convinced he would not be convicted and stayed. He spent the next two years in prison.

Years later, after becoming a doctor and researcher at Heidelberg's Institutes of Anatomy and Pathology, Von Hagens, drawing on this experience, always “made a clear decision in favour of uncertainty because uncertainty always represents an opportunity”.

This conviction helps explain how Dr Von Hagens eventually developed a wholly new method of preserving human bodies after death. After years of experimentation, he perfected the ability to replace fluids in human (and animal) tissue with reactive plastics and resins. He named it “plastination”.

Seven years ago, half a million people filed through the Kelders van Cureghem in Anderlecht to see *Körperwelten*, or *Body Worlds*, the first ever exhibition of human plastinates. The same location last weekend saw the opening of *Body Worlds 4*, a brand new show of plastinated body parts, internal organs, blood vessels, full human bodies, several human embryos and one big gorilla.

Plastinated organs allow visitors to see what a heart or lung or kidney really looks like and learn a bit about how it functions. There are the inevitable smoker's lungs, and even a “smoker's leg”. Even more intriguing are the “slices” – specially plastinated human bodies are sliced either top to bottom or front to back to show cross-sections of human anatomy.

What everyone really comes to see, though, are the full body plastinates. There are several new specimens in *Body Worlds 4*

posed in a variety of ways. One of the most striking is “The Badminton Player”, whose body is split into three parts – the middle section housing the internal organs. And it's hard to resist a running skeleton passing a baton to its plastinate counterpart, particularly just after your Athletics team has won a medal at the Olympic games.

Plastinates allow the living to see the inside of the body in a way never before possible and much more effectively than a drawing or a plastic model. The ability to see for yourself human muscles, the intricacy of the spinal column, the brain and all the internal organs right where they belong is really an unforgettable experience.

It's also, according to Von Hagen, a natural progression. Embalming methods have been practiced for thousands of years. We're now grateful, for instance, to have the opportunity to see and study Egyptian mummies. Plastination has also introduced a sort of democracy to anatomy: previously only the privileged few were allowed to see the insides of the human body. Now we all can. We all have bodies, and we deserve no less.

I agree. What I question is the intention of Von Hagens and his team with *Body Worlds 4*. Von Hagens' work has been plagued with controversy since the beginning by those who believe that using human bodies in exhibitions is immoral. He states in the catalogue available at the end of the show: “From my perspective, plastinated specimens are not works of art because they have been created for the sole purpose of sharing insights into human anatomy.... plastinate specimens are not intended to meet any artistic demands.”

Really, Dr Von Hagens? Because these installations – and that is what they are – are not offering visitors any new anatomical information that would not have been discovered in the original *Body Worlds* seven years ago, not to mention *Body Worlds*

2 and 3 (which did not come to Belgium). And I fail to see how three plastinates playing poker or one bent backward rocking out on an electric guitar are not meeting artistic demands.

Body Worlds appears to be warping from an awe-inspiring exploration of the human condition to: Showtime! Many of these plastinates are being posed for comic effect, and that is teetering on the edge of exploitation.

Still, whole body plastinates continue to fascinate the public. At a crowded opening night, a mother was talking her boy of about 10 through some of the anatomical details that he was seeing. At first, he was visibly upset, but later on, he was just as visibly intrigued. It's hard to argue with that kind of learning.

I also get the feeling that a lot of guys would think that being posed playing poker or as a rock star for all eternity would be totally awesome. And some of Von Hagens' work is conceptually brilliant. In one installation, a woman plastinate lies on an operating table, while another removes her heart. She is looking towards him, and it elicits an emotional feeling of gratitude to these people for letting us witness something so intimate.

In these kinds of cases, *Body Worlds* still works to educate and to inspire us to look death in the face and, rather than fear it, embrace it. I don't think that the concept itself is immoral. But a level of respect is required to keep the original, valuable mission of the project from turning into a circus sideshow, and Von Hagens is getting dangerously close to crossing a line that most of us are subconsciously drawing.

online
www.bodyworlds.be

FASHIONISTA



Design September Brussels 2008

In September, Brussels is all about design, all month long. The city launched its first design festival two years ago to celebrate the Year of Fashion and Design, and perhaps also because of the city's lack of a museum devoted to the subject. In any case, the concept proved popular enough to repeat every year. Design September is in every way a true festival. Between 7 and 30 September, the city will be overwhelmed by numerous exhibitions, conferences, openings, debates, film screens and so on. As with any festival, it's difficult to see the wood for the trees, so here are a couple of events I certainly won't be missing.

I'm most definitely starting out by visiting the Gre3n Design exhibition, which begins on 12 September. It can't be easy to bring together aesthetic ideals with a green philosophy, so I'm curious to see how designers are using recycled materials to create new art. Especially since I've heard there will be old washing machines and seatbelts involved.

On 14 September, I'm making my way to the Brussels Design Market to spot some original 1940s to 1980s furniture and objects. It's not only the perfect place to stroll in the pleasant atmosphere of a flea market, it's also a wonderful opportunity to finally get my hands on an Eames chair or Knoll table.



Brussels is buried in design this month

More fun is to be had at Come Out & Play! organised by Recyclart and Sint-Lukas Brussels in the neighbourhood of Kapellekerk station. Beginning 19 September, visitors are invited to transform the public space during the day and to party at night, three days in a row.

On Thursday nights, you'll find me in the bar of The Dominican Hotel, a Bombay Sapphire cocktail in hand and listening to the tunes of several live DJs. I'm eager to admire the cocktail glasses designed by Karim Rashid, Eva Zeisel and many others who participated in the Designer Glass contest.

And of course, we wouldn't be in Belgium if there weren't some kind of gastronomic event involved. To top off a perfect day filled with design, I'm making reservations at one of the participating restaurants offering a specially designed chocolate menu. Who said design should be restricted to the plates on which your dinner is served?

Stéphanie Duval

online
www.designseptember.be

Heritage has its day

Get inside some quirky modern buildings when Flemish monuments open to the public

Derek Blyth

Most of the time, no one really notices the buildings that surround their lives. But the annual Heritage Day suddenly turns old buildings of brick and stone into star attractions. You see queues stretching around the block waiting patiently to look around something that you have never before given a second glance.

After France launched the first Journee du Patrimoine in 1994, the idea of opening monuments to the public slowly spread to almost every country and region in Europe. In 1998, Flanders was one of the first regions to organise a day of heritage hunting, with buildings open free of charge. On 14 September the region is celebrating the 20th anniversary by focusing on 20th-century architecture.

A *De Standaard* columnist raised the question of whether 20th-century buildings could really be called "heritage". Some of these buildings were put up in our

lifetime. Doesn't heritage imply that the dust has been given time to settle?

But maybe it's a good idea to get these new buildings in the public eye at the earliest opportunity. One of the aims of heritage day is to safeguard buildings for future generations, and many 20th-century buildings are in danger of getting the chop precisely because no one cares about them.

In choosing 20th-century architecture as a theme, the organisers have provided an important lesson on the recent history of Flanders. Many of the buildings in the catalogue don't look 20th century at all. Many of them, in fact, look Gothic.

The sobering explanation is war. During the four years of the First World War, many cities, towns and villages in Flanders were pounded by shellfire. Some, like Ypres, were reduced to scorched red brick dust. Others, as in the case of Leuven, lost several historic buildings.

When the money was found for reconstruction, locals wanted

everything put back exactly the way it used to be. In the case of Ypres, that meant construction workers rebuilding Gothic churches and step-gable houses, while fellow workers elsewhere in the world were putting up boldly Modernist structures.

That explains the inclusion of the Diksmuide Begijnhof, which looks thoroughly mediaeval but was in fact reconstructed in the 1920s. The theme also allows for military structures to be opened to the public, like a stretch of Belgian trenches on the Ijzer front line and a concrete bunker from the First World War outside the village of Moerslede.

Flicking through the catalogue of buildings, it's quickly clear that Flanders embraced modernism slowly and fairly reluctantly. Along the coast, property developers were still constructing late 19th-century Belle Epoque well into the 20th century. But modernism gradually took hold in the region as urban house builders began tentatively to add modernist details to their new

homes.

For truly daring architecture, you have to go out to Grimbergen airfield, north of Brussels, where the building contractor Alfred Hardy built two astonishing circular hangars in 1947. Hardy had no training as an architect, but he created a brilliant design with capacity for 35 aircraft. The result was widely admired and, in 1964, earned a place at an exhibition on Twentieth Century Engineering in New York's Museum of Modern Art.

While the aim of heritage days is to raise awareness about a country's architectural heritage and prod the authorities into saving the best buildings, striking buildings are being torn down all the time. The Cinema Printania in Houthulst, West Flanders, is due to be demolished this winter to make way for new housing. So this heritage day will be the last chance to see inside this nostalgic 1928 relic.

online

www.openmonumenten.be

That rings a bell

The carillon school Koninklijke Beiaarschool in Mechelen is exhibiting an astronomical clock on Heritage Day made by the director Jo Haazen. The school is also displaying a reproduction of a small Rubens painting that was taken from a Mechelen church in 1794 by the French occupying army and never recovered. But Haazen thinks he has found it.

He was visiting an exhibition in Russia when he saw the missing painting, which originally formed part of the large altarpiece "The Miraculous Draught of Fishes". It now belongs to the Hermitage and is unlikely to be returned to the Mechelen church where it once hung, but we now at least know where to find it.



Modern times (clockwise from top):
Antwerp's Boerentoren, the Normandie
hotel ship at Koksijde, Grimbergen airfield,
the Pieter De Bruyne House in Aalst, the
Begijnhof in Diksmuide



Heritage Day in Flanders is on 14 September.
All buildings are open free of charge, but
some require advanced reservation



SPECIAL EVENT

Glorious Gordel

Stroll along a canal or sweat past the infamous Geraardsbergen Wall during Flanders' biggest family event

Denzil Walton

The Flemish love cycling and walking – particularly on Sundays. So it's no surprise that on 7 September (a Sunday) about 80,000 cyclists and walkers are expected to turn up for the Gordel, Flanders' biggest family-oriented cycling and walking event.

The Gordel (Dutch for "belt") originated around the outskirts of Brussels in the 1980s as a highly political event. It was a symbolic assertion that the municipalities through which the route passed are part of Flanders and should continue to be governed by Flemish politicians. Or as Yves Leterme, then Minister-President of Flanders, said in 2006: "The Gordel is a pleasant way to say that we want to keep the villages around Brussels Flemish."

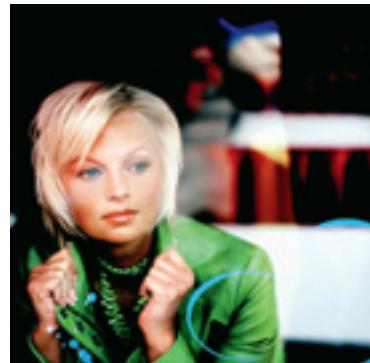
The event is organised by Blos, the Flemish sports agency, and is held each year on the first Sunday of September. The first one was in 1981, when 1,302 participants rolled up and managed to combine making a serious statement with enjoying outdoor activity. Last year, numbers reached 77,000. "We are expecting about the same number this year, although it depends on the weather," says Blos representative Luk Peirlinck. "But even heavy rain won't keep away the tens of thousands who participate every year regardless of the weather."

Over the years, the Gordel has evolved into the biggest family-oriented sporting and musical event in Flanders. Indeed, participating these days certainly does not identify you as a political activist. You are encouraged to come along for the ride, improve your fitness, discover the Flemish countryside, get to see Flemish artists perform, sample the local beer

and food or simply have a fun day out with family or friends, nearly all for free. (You might also on any given year be able to catch the rather unforgettable sight of Flemish politicians in cycling shorts.)

The popularity of the Gordel is such that it has spawned a whole vocabulary. On the route, you can buy Gordelbier, Gordeltaart, Gordelpalines and Gordelworst. You can join in the singing of the Gordellied. Each year a new Gordel Song is composed and is recorded by a different Flemish celebrity. The very first one 27 years ago was sung by Micha Marah, who two years earlier had represented Belgium in the Eurovision Song Contest. "Ik hou van alle zes" ("I love all six") was a statement in support of the six Flemish municipalities on the outskirts of Brussels (Sint-Genesius-Rode, Drogenbos, Kraainem, Linkebeek, Wemmel and Wezembeek-Oppem) that were granted liberty to offer language facilities in French for their Francophone inhabitants.

Since then, the microphone has passed to virtually every famous



Flemish country-western: Barbara Dex will sing this year's Gordellied

contemporary Flemish singers or groups, including Will Tura, Clouseau, Isabelle A, Helmut Lotti, K3 and Spring. Even children's favourites Gert and Samson and comedian Chris van den Durpel's



Nearly 80,000 are expected at this year's Gordel, Flanders' annual cycle and walking event

comic character Kamiel Spiessens have had their moments singing the Gordellied. This year's song is the country & western number "Onderweg met jou" ("On the Way with You") and has been recorded by Barbara Dex and Bart Herman.

So what can you expect if you sign up for this year's event? If you have a vision of thousands of cyclists and walkers queuing up waiting for the starting gun to go off, thankfully it doesn't work like that at all. There are four starting points, one each located in Sint-Genesius-Rode, Dilbeek, Zaventem and Overijse. Between them they offer 23 cycling or walking routes covering 800 km, catering for everyone's needs. And you can start and finish when you like.

For example, at Sint-Genesius-Rode you might like to take the kids on the 7km Children's Olympics Walk, during which various Olympic sports will be demonstrated. Kids are encouraged to try them out. From Dilbeek, you can attempt a 25km cycling route through the beautiful countryside alongside the River Pede. From Zaventem you could join the 15km Monument Walk, which will lead you to the Museum of Old Techniques in Grimbergen before ending at the MIRA Astronomical Observatory. Or you might prefer to challenge yourself on the 55km cycle route, which starts in Overijse and gets your legs pumping up and down the hills southeast of Brussels.

Overijse is also the place to be for mountain bikers, with three routes laid out between 20 and 40km. Showers are helpfully provided at the end to wash off the mud. European champion Patrick Smit will

offer practical tips at his day-long mountain biking clinic.

For amateur racers, a 140km course starts from Dilbeek, goes over 12 hills to Oudenaarde and back and includes the famous Geraardsbergen Wall with its 20% incline.

However, the most popular route is the Gordel Classic, which is cycled by around 15,000 hardy souls every year. It's a 100km course that takes in all four Gordel centres and 18 Flemish municipalities around Brussels. You can start at any of the centres any time between 7.00 and 10.00. At a steady 20km per hour and with a few breaks, you'll need about six hours to complete it.

All routes are excellently signposted with coloured icons, and hordes of volunteers are strategically positioned at key intersections. In addition, many of the roads are closed off for Gordel participants, ensuring the luxury of clear roads ahead and the feeling of superiority as you sail past queuing motorists. For cyclists, helmets are recommended and can be purchased fairly cheaply at the Gordel centres.

At the end of the day, when you've treated your blisters and massaged life back into your buttocks, you can enjoy live concerts at each of the four Gordel centres. Take your pick of the Flemish performer you wish to see: Isabelle A in Sint-Genesius-Rode; Gene Thomas in Dilbeek; Udo in Zaventem; Barbara Dex and Bart Herman in Overijse. Concerts start at 16.30.

You can register for Gordel events on the day itself or beforehand at a number of municipalities, sports centres and cultural centres or online. Registration for

No sabotage, please

Due to its controversial political origins, it was obvious that not everyone in Belgium would be happy with the Gordel. Attempts to disrupt the event by a handful of French-speaking activists are common, usually by sabotaging signs; during the 1995 event, walkers were surprised to find themselves directed to walk along the E411 motorway.

Nails strewn on cycle paths have also been a hazard for cyclists. Two years ago, police caught a lawyer from Waterloo throwing drawing pins on the route. In his vehicle were over 4,000 pins and three stolen signposts. "Unfortunately a few troublemakers go to work every year, but we take a number of precautions to ensure that their tricks don't succeed," says Luk Peirlinck of Blos. "We have a 30-strong team responsible for verifying that signs are correctly positioned and that routes are nail-free."

any cycling event is essential as it includes insurance and assistance in case of an accident. For cyclists, vans circulate to repair punctures or pick up faulty bikes. At only €4 EUR or €6, it's extremely good value for a perfect day out.

Check out next week's issue of Flanders Today to read your reporter's experience of this year's 100 km Gordel Classic.

online
www.de-gordel.be

Not just for the Flemish

The origins of the Gordel may lie in language issues, but interest in it now extends way beyond those barriers. "In the first place, the Gordel is a family-oriented event, with a lot of great activities for children," says Luk Peirlinck of Blos. "You don't need to be Flemish to enjoy having your face painted, go on a treasure hunt or do the Sleeping Beauty walk." Indeed, every year more and more people from a variety of backgrounds join in. Moreover, notes Peirlinck: "The chorus of last year's Gordellied was in Flemish, English and French! It's definitely a multicultural, fun event to which everyone is warmly invited."



No need to speak Dutch here

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Denzil Walton

For a short end-of-summer break, what about exploring one of Flanders' hidden gems...by boat?

The Westhoek is one of the lesser known areas of Flanders. The fact that you are reading this and probably thinking "Westhoek? Where's that?" proves my point.

One reason that this stunning far western corner of Flanders is little known is that it lies just inland from the Flemish west coast and so is overshadowed by its more showy neighbours De Panne, Koksijde, Nieuwpoort and Middelkerke. Then there is the E40, which carves through it and tends to accelerate tourists either westwards to Calais or eastwards to Brugge – but only rarely deposits them in the Westhoek.

And it lacks any major cities: there's no Ghent, Antwerp or Leuven. Even its largest town – Ieper – keeps itself off the radar screen. Until, that is, the French version of its name is revealed. "Oh you mean Ypres! I've heard of that!"

The Westhoek itself is also better known under an alternative name – Flanders Fields. It's a name that has evoked strong emotions since John McCrae wrote his poem in 1915, which began: "In Flanders fields the poppies blow, Between the crosses, row on row."

There is certainly much in the area of war memorials to see and visit: Tyne Cot in Zonnebeke, In Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres, Hill 62 Museum in Zillebeke, the Passchendaele Memorial Museum in Zonnebeke, the Trench of Death in Diksmuide.

Yet the Westhoek is far more than this. It's an area rich in nature. The wet marshes of the River Ijzer and the Blankart nature reserve attract tens of thousands of migrating geese and ducks, as well as breeding black-tailed godwits and bearded reedlings. The Kemmelberg – at 156 metres the highest "peak" in Flanders – is famed for its wealth

of wildflowers. The woods of Koekelaere and Houthulst may be small, but they are wonderful areas to explore.

In between is a myriad of charming market towns: Lo-Reininge, Poperinge, Wervik, Vleteren, Alveringem...the list is endless, each with its own local produce, customs, dialects and events. One such is the three-day Hops Festival in Poperinge on 19-21 September. Taking place every three years, the highlight is a parade that shows the origin, history, culture and folklore of hops. It's rounded off by a music festival and fireworks display, all well lubricated by an abundance of locally brewed beers such as Poperings Hommelbier, Sint-Sixtus and Plokkers.

To discover the riches of the Westhoek, the area is criss-crossed with networks of walking and cycling routes, catering for all levels of fitness and enthusiasm. However, there is a slower-paced way to explore the region.

In Nieuwpoort, Le Boat offers a wide range of modern cruisers for hire. Sleeping between two and 10 and fully equipped with modern galleys and comfortable living accommodation, they offer a unique opportunity to discover the Westhoek "from the inside out". For example, in a weekend you could cruise down the Ijzer to Diksmuide, carry on south to Ypres, turn north up the Lo Canal to Veurne and return to Nieuwpoort. Boats can be picked up at 16.00 on Friday and returned at 9.00 on Monday and are available until the end of October.

If your only experience of being on a boat is the Calais-Dover ferry, don't worry. You get an hour's training before you get to call yourself Captain. This includes know-

ing how to start, stop and manoeuvre, go through locks, tie up at the water's edge and moor in a marina. You will also get an information pack and a map of the waterways.

What's more, technical support is only a phone call away. You can also hire a couple of bikes and put them on board. They are extremely useful to nip into the nearest town to see the sights or find somewhere to eat.

The smallest boat available is designed for two, although the settee converts into a small child's bed. The larger ones sleep 10 and have three showers and three toilets. Bed linen and towels are provided.

Taking a short break on the Westhoek's waterways in autumn is advantageous for two reasons. It's low season, so the prices are attractive. Also, the summer has been so miserable that September and October might end up warmer and drier than August. In other words, perfect weather for messing about on the river.

online

www.leboat.be

www.toerismewesthoek.be

TOUCHING BASE the week in sport



Shutterstock

Baseball

After the **Merksem Greys** defeated the **Mortsel Stars** twice, the former club has assured itself of a much-coveted spot in the Belgium Series. The national championship will be decided when the Greys take on the favourites **Hoboken Pioneers** on 4 October. The latter have dropped only one game since the First Division split into an Elite Division and a Promo Division in June. The Greys, meanwhile, are the defending national champions. Each team will play four more games during the regular season. If Hoboken holds onto first place it will enjoy home-field advantage throughout the five-game series, meaning it will play at least two and possibly three home games to Merksem's one or two.

The Elite Division now looks like this:

Team	Wins	Losses
Hoboken Pioneers	15	1
Merksem Greys	13	3
Mortsel Stars	7	9
Namur Angels	6	10
Brasschaat Braves	4	12
Borgerhout Squirrels	3	13

Down in the Promo Division, the league-leading **Merchtem Cats** and **Brussels Kangaroos** split their two games to maintain the status quo. The two Brussels-area clubs are sharing the lead in the division, which will see its two best teams playing in First Division next year. Mathematically, the **Deurne Spartans** and **Antwerp Eagles** are virtually eliminated in the race for promotion or preservation.

Promo Division

Team	Wins	Losses
Merchtem Cats	9	2
Brussels Kangaroos	9	2
Deurne Spartans	6	5
Antwerp Eagles	6	10
Beveren Lions	2	7
Louvain-La-Neuve Phoenix	1	11

American football

With American football season inching closer, the recruitment drive of the seven local clubs is in full swing. The Junior season (14-19 year olds) will run from the end of September until November, followed by the Senior season (19+) from February to May. All clubs offer a free trial-practice for which insurance is provided. Anyone interested in playing or coaching should check out www.americanfootball.be

Rugby

With the national rugby league set to kick off on 7 September, several elite clubs have attracted new players to reinforce their ranks. Most notably, **Dendermonde** has drawn new blood by attracting one prop from the French league (who had previously represented Jet and Anderlecht) and another from **Oudenaarde**. Several players were also brought in from **Antwerp**, while others moved in the opposite direction. It promises to be an exciting new season of top rugby.

Leander Schaerlaeckens

Classical & New Music**Antwerp**

Amuz
Kammenstraat 81; 03.248.28.28
SEP 7 16.00 Free Fall. Intermission.
Nils Wogram & Simon Nabatov
SEP 8 20.00 Michele Rabbia,
percussion. Reijseger-Sclavis-Van Hove

Café King Kong
Volksstraat 58; 03.202.46.49
SEP 9-14 22.00 FTS Club Sessions

Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst

Antwerpen (MuHKA)
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.260.99.99,
www.muhka.be
SEP 9 20.00 Film: *Imagine the Sound* by Ron Mann (Can 1981)
SEP 10-11 20.00 Film: *Off the Road* by Laurence Petit-Jouvet (Fr 2007), with music by Peter Jacquemyn, bass
SEP 11 19.00, 20.00 & 21.00 Barkin' #1, #2, #3. 22.00 DJ Ipiki

Brussels

Beursschouwburg
Auguste Ortsstraat 20-28; 02.550.03.50,
www.beursschouwburg.be
Klara Festival:
SEP 3 12.30 Aleksander Madzar, piano:
Berio, Ravel, Schubert. 20.00 Roberto
Prosseda, piano: Chopin, Mendelssohn.
22.00 Andrea Belfi: electro-acoustic
soundscapes. Het Collectief:
contemporary music by Van Hecke,
Francesconi
SEP 4 12.30 Pieter Wispelwey, cello:
Kodály, Escher. 20.00 Danel Quartet:
Schubert's String Quartet No 13, Opus
29, Puccini's Crisantemi, Beethoven's
String Quartet No 132. 22.00 Roberto
Prosseda, piano, Gianni Gebbia,
saxophone: Mendelssohn, Clementi
SEP 5 12.30 Peter Jablonski, piano:
Scarlatti, Barber, Gershwin, Copland.
22.00 Zodiak Trio: jazz. Bl!ndman 44
Strings: George Crumb's Black Angels
SEP 7 11.00 Quartetto di Cremona:
Boccherini, Schumann
SEP 8 12.30 Giovanni Bellucci, piano:
Liszt's *Après une lecture de Dante*,
Liszt/Verdi's *Miserere de Trovatore*,
Liszt/Bellini's *Réminiscences de
Norma*. 22.00 Winter Family, voice/
piano synthesizer. Ziv Braha, lute: Bach

SEP 9 12.30 Sergei Krylov, violin:
Ysayé's Violin Sonata No 2, Bach's
Chaconne from Partita No 2, Paganini's
12 Capricci. 22.00 Ergophizmiz and
Edding Quartet **SEP 10** 12.30 Aviv
Quartet: Beethoven's String Quartet
Opus 95, Shostakovich's String Quartet
No 3. 22.00 Määk's Spirit and Spectra
SEP 11 12.30 Christian Poltera, cello;
Cédric Tiberghien, piano: Beethoven's
Variations on a theme by Mozart,
Debussy's Cello and Piano Sonata,
Weill's Cello Sonata. 22.00 Cristina
Zavalloni/Wibert Aerts: Nono

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

SEP 5 20.00 Sergio Tiempo, piano:
Haydn, Chopin, Ravel, Ginastera, Liszt
SEP 6 20.00 Brussels Philharmonic
(Vlaams Radio Orkest) and Coro
dell'Accademia nazionale di Santa
Cecilia conducted by Michel
Tabachnik, with Peter Donohoe, piano:
Busoni, Scelsi, Brahms
SEP 7 11.00 Quartetto di Cremona:
Boccherini, Schumann

SEP 8 20.00 Mariinsky Orchestra
conducted by Valery Gergiev, with
Sergei Krylov, violin: Ustovskaya's
Symphony No 3, Tchaikovsky's
Violin Concerto Opus 35, Silvestrov's
Symphony No 6
SEP 9 20.00 Il Giardino Armonico
with Bernarda Fink, mezzo: Il Pianto
di Maria: Caldara, Marini, Monteverdi,
Vivaldi, Conti, Pisendel, Weiss, Handel
SEP 10 20.00 Alicia Nafé, mezzo;
Gabriel Rios, Geike Arnaert, Girls in
Hawaii: improvisations
SEP 11 20.00 Orchestre des Champs-
Elysées conducted by Philippe
Herreweghe: Bruckner's Symphony
No 8

Grote Markt
Grote marktplein
SEP 5 17.00 Coro dell'Accademia
nazionale di Santa Cecilia: Verdi's
Quattro Pezzi Sacri (free)

**Saint Michael and St Gudula
Cathedral**
Sinter-Goedeleplein; 02.217.83.45
SEP 7 10.00 Mrs Johnson Women's
Choir conducted by John Damsma:
Herman Strategier

Hoeilaart

Maison de la Musique
Edgar Sohiestraat 41; 02.657.96.52
SEP 6 18.00 Simona Zajancauskaité,
piano; Axel de Jenlis, cello: Scriabine,
Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov

Poeke (Aalter)

Kasteel van Poeke
Kasteelstraat 26; 051.68.83.00
SEP 7 11.00 Fêtes Galantes, with
sopranos Hendrickje Van Kerckhove
and Inge Spinnete

Opera**Bruges**

Stadhuis
Grote Markt; 070.222.007,
www.ideefixe.be
Until SEP 13 21.00 Rossini's *The
Barber of Seville* conducted by Eric
Lederhandler, staged by François de
Carpentries

Brussels

De Munt
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39
SEP 4-23 The Monnaie Opera
Orchestra & Chorus in Pelléas et
Mélisande by Claude Debussy,
conducted by Mark Wigglesworth,
staged by Pierre Audi

Jazz & blues**Antwerp**

deSingel
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28,
www.desingel.be
SEP 6 16.00 Film: *My Name is Albert
Ayler* by Kasper Collin (Swe 2005).
17.15 Matthew Shipp, piano. 18.30 Roy
Campbell Quartet plays Albert Ayler

Borgerhout

De Roma
Turnhoutsebaan 286; 03.235.04.90,
www.deroma.be
SEP 6 20.30 JazzLab series: Hamster
Axis of the One-Click Panther + All
Stars Band with Kris Defoort and Bert
Joris

Brussels

Le Grain d'Orge
Waversesteenweg 142; 02.511.26.47
SEP 5 21.30 Made J

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
SEP 3 20.30 Lennart Van Praet Trio
SEP 5 20.45 The Jeggpap Jazz Band
SEP 11 12.30 Micheline Van Hautem

Hasselt

Kunstencentrum België
Burgemeester Bollenstraat 54;
011.22.41.61,
www.kunstencentrumbelgie.com
SEP 5 20.30 Peter Brötzmann,
Toshinori Kondo, Paal Nilssen-Love
and Massimo Pupillo

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

De Roma
Turnhoutsebaan 286; 03.235.04.90,
www.deroma.be
SEP 5 20.30 Tanguedia

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
SEP 7 20.00 Bart Peeters

Café Central

Borgval 14; 02.513.73.08
SEP 4 23.00 Central Electric/Mickey
(Dirty Dancin')
SEP 5 23.00 Doktor Igor
SEP 6 23.00 Intergalactic Gary +
Rob'n'zoopsie aka The Revolving Eyes +
DJ Spacid + Nelson Bishop + J Error +
Lady Jane

De Zotte Ezel

Koninklijke Sinte-Mariastraat
SEP 5 20.00 Rue Royale (acoustic folk
rock from Chicago)

Fuse

Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89
SEP 6 23.00 Resident night: DJ Pierre

Le Botanique

Koningstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
SEP 3 20.00 Conor Oberst and the
Mystic Valley Band

SEP 5 20.30 Daisybox

Deurne

Openluchttheater Rivierenhof
Turnhoutsebaan 232; 070.222.192,
www.openluchttheater.be
SEP 6 20.30 Think of One & Friends
present Camping Shâabi

Ghent

Kinky Star
Vlaamse Markt 9
SEP 7 21.00 Thou (indy pop)

World, folk**Antwerp**

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00,
www.zuiderpershuis.be
SEP 5-6 Festa Balkanica: films,
concerts, DJs

Brussels

Art Base
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20
SEP 6 21.00 Tango Experience with
Silvia Abalos and musicians

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
SEP 4 20.30 Havano

Ghent

De Centrale
Kraankindersstraat 2; 09.265.98.28,
www.decentrale.be
SEP 6 20.00 The Nile Band (Sudan)

Theatre

Brussels
KVS Bol
Lakensestraat 146; 02.210.11.12,
www.kvs.be
SEP 9-12 20.00 Kroum by Hanoch
Levin (in Dutch with French and
English surtitles)

Visual arts**Antwerp**

**Contemporary Art Museum
(MuHKA)**
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60
Until SEP 9 Fantasy, intervention by
Koen van den Broek

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 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 Summer of
Photography)
Until SEP 14 Summertime,
photographs by Verne

**Koninklijk Museum voor Schone
Kunsten/Royal Museum of Fine Arts**
Leopold De Waelplaats; 03.238.78.09
SEP 9-DEC 14 Head on Shoulders.
Portrait busts in the Low Countries,
1600 – 1800, likeness of politicians,
scientists, philosophers, mythical
figures, writers and actresses

Middelheim Museum

Middelheimlaan 6; 03.827.15.34
Until SEP 21 Sculptures 1985-2007 by
Philip Aguirre y Otegui

Rockox House

Keizerstraat 12; 03.201.92.50
Until SEP 21 Ensor pays a visit to the
Rockox House: A Confrontation

Bruges**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

Brussels**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

Belvue Museum

Paleizenplein 7; 02.511.44.25,
www.belvue.be

Until SEP 14 Magritte and Mariën, My
Accomplices: sketches, photographs
and correspondence between Jacqueline
Nonkels, Marcel Mariën, René and
Georgette Magritte, as well as an
accompanying collection of Surrealist
works, including poetry and literature

Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be

Until SEP 14 It's Not Only Rock
'n' Roll, Baby!, 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
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-François for Expo 58

De Loge Architecturmuseum

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

Erasmus House

Kapittelstraat 31; 02.521.13.83
Until SEP 16 Anatomie van de Ijdelen (Anatomy of the Vanities), the museum's 75th anniversary show, with works by Hieronymus Bosch, Jan Fabre, Hans Holbein, Marie-Jo Lafontaine, Aida Kazarian and Quinten Metsys

Espace Photographique Contretype

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

ISELP

Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70
Until SEP 26 White Noise, ceramics by Caroline Andrin and others
Until OCT 11 Daisaku Nagai, paintings
Until OCT 11 Lights by Françoise De Smet and jewellery by Alice de Wrangel

Jacques Franck Cultural Centre

Waterloosesteenweg 94; 02.538.90.20
SEP 5-OCT 5 Peres, video work and photographs of Gaza by Palestinian photographer Paysir Batniji

Jewish Museum of Belgium

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

La Maison de la Bande Dessinée

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

Le Botanique

Koningstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
SEP 5-OCT 12 Retrospective of work by Palestinian photographer Rula Halawani

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 Museum of Art and History

Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11
Until SEP 30 België op opticaprenten (Belgium on Optical Prints), 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 Summer of Photography)

Until SEP 14 Vudoptik, young photographers' views of their favourite Brussels' monument (part of Summer of Photography)

Until SEP 21 Expo '58 through the lens of Gérard Castello-Lopes, photographs of the World's Fair (part of Summer of Photography)

Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11, www.fine-arts-museum.be
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 entitled 50 Years of Modern Art

Until OCT 5 Art and Finance in Europe, 15th-century masterworks highlighting the social and historical representation of money by Rogier van der Weyden and Hans Memling, among others

Royal Museum for Central Africa

Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11
Until SEP 28 Naabas Traditional Chiefs of Burkina Faso, outdoor exhibition of large-scale photographs by Jean-Dominique Burton (part of 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 Jasinski 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 others

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.347.30.33
SEP 6-NOV 2 Kelly Walker, works with appropriated and recycled images

SEP 6-NOV 2 Nothing More Natural, drawings, computer and video art exploring the relationship between sex and technology in contemporary society by Belgian artist Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven

Watermael Station

Taillstraat 2
Until SEP 15 Een picturale reis (A Pictorial Journey), paintings by Mig Quinet

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 and Roger Raveel, among others (see also Roger Raveel Museum in Machelen-Zulte)

Ghent

Caermersklooster
Vrouwebroersstraat 6; 09.269.29.10
Until SEP 14 Disappearing Worlds, photographs of indigenous peoples in Australia, New Guinea and South Africa by Danish anthropologist Jens Bjerre

Until SEP 14 Eighty-four: in pek op papier (in Pitch on Paper), large-format drawings by Flemish artist 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, work 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 SEP 21 Electrified, installations combining visual, sound and electronic arts by Ronald Kuivila and Edwin van der Heide

Hasselt

Z33
Zuivelmarkt (Beguinage) 33; 011.29.59.60
Until SEP 29 1% Water, art and design relating to global water issues

Kemzeke

Verbeke Foundation
Hulsterstraat Noord; www.verbekefoundation.com
Until NOV 16 Vision in Motion – Motion in Vision, 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 and Roger Raveel, among others (see also Dhondt-Dhaenens Museum in Deurle)

Mechelen

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

Cultuurcentrum

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

Ypres

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

Until NOV 12 Off the record, work by artist-in-residence Wendy Morris
Festivals & special events

Belgium Roller Parade

Weekly rollerskating parades
Until SEP 29 across Belgium
www.belgiumrollers.com

Summer of Photography

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

Antwerp

Antwerp Expat Welcome Party 2008: Annual free event with a walking dinner, live entertainment, practical information, a tombola and the chance to meet other expats, as well as locals
SEP 11 18.00 at Radisson SAS Park Lane Hotel, Van Eycklei 34
www.xpats.com, events@ackroyd.be

Antwerp on Wheels: Roller parade through the streets of Antwerp. Warm-up, skating lessons and entertainment from 18.30

SEP 6 20.00 starting from Dageraadplaats in Zurenborg
0498.44.11.8, info@antwerponwheels.be

Brussels

Belgian Beer Weekend: Annual beer festival celebrates its 10th anniversary
SEP 5-7 on the Grote Markt
www.weekenddelabiere.be

Drive-In Movies: Outdoor festival with music, barbecue and films projected on a giant screen on Friday and Saturday evenings

Until SEP 13 20.00 at Jubelpark, Ridderschaplaan
www.driveinmovies.be

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

Don't miss this week



www.archinedes.de

Science Tunnel

Until 10 October, Ethias Arena, Gouverneur Verwilghensingel 70, Hasselt, www.scientunnel.com

For those of you who aren't quite up to the new *Body Worlds* exhibition in Brussels, Hasselt is offering a wonderful journey of its own through the human body – plus a walk on Mars and a race through cities at the speed of light. Developed at the Max Planck Society in Germany, the Science Tunnel is quite literally that – you walk under an archway of interactive displays that convey the basics of current scientific discoveries and research. The non-profit research organisation is using this free and fun approach to bring this year's science headlines directly to the layperson with programs that allow you to fight like a virus or dance like an atom.

International Brigittines Festival

A collection of theatre and dance performances

Until SEP 6 at Les Brigittines, Korte Brigittinenstraat 02.506.43.00, www.brigittines.be

KlaraFestival 2008: International music festival including contemporary music and jazz around the theme Forza Musica!, the strength of music

Until SEP 12 in venues and public spaces around Brussels
070.21.02.17, www.klarafestival.be

Living Room Music: Thirty concerts with classical & world music in your neighbourhood. With just one ticket, the public can travel a musical route along a series of living rooms, while also discovering what lies behind these Brussels' facades

SEP 5-7 in Anderlecht, Etterbeek and Drogenbos
www.livingroommusic.be

Marni Jazz Rendez-Vous: Festival celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Travers jazz club, including Belgian and international artists

SEP 4-12 at Théâtre Marni, Vergniestraat 25
02.354.43.68, www.theatremarni.com

Memorial Van Damme Athletics

Meeting: Annual international athletics competition starring American sprinter Tyson Gay and Belgian athletes Kim Gevaert and Tia Hellebaut. Entertainment includes a Chinese show, concert by Kid Creole and the Coconuts and fireworks

SEP 5 at King Baudouin Stadium, Marathonlaan 135
www.memorialvandamme.be

Shuffle #3: Festival of international dance and theatre to introduce Kaaithete's new season

Until SEP 6 at Kaaithete, Sainctelettesquare 20, and other venues 02.201.59.59, www.kaaithete.be

Spoken World 08

New multidisciplinary festival exploring global arts and issues in association with Flemish-Dutch centre deBuren. It includes the Interdependence Forum 2008 and European Festival of Intercultural Dialogue
SEP 9-13 at Kaaithete,

Sainctelettesquare 20
02.201.59.59, www.kaaithete.be

Tour of the Royal Palace: The Royal Palace is open to the public

Until SEP 7 at Koninklijk Paleis, Brederodestraat 16
02.551.20.20, www.monarchie.be

Ghent

Bijloke Festival: Music centre De Bijloke kicks off its new season with this free festival of classical music, tango, musical theatre and more
SEP 6 15.00 at De Bijloke, Jozef Kluyvensstraat 2
09.269.92.92, www.debijloke.be

Think! holebifufi: Dance party for the gay/lesbian/bi and transsexual community

SEP 6 at Vooruit, Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 23
www.holebifufi.be

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

Wardrobe: A fashion show and sale featuring unique creations from 23 designers from Ghent
SEP 6 at Link Gallery, Blekersdijk 32
www.fashionforward.be

Ostend

Film Festival Ostend: the second edition of this festival that incorporates video gaming and television series into the traditional feature-film line-up
Until SEPT 6 across Ostend
www.filmfestivalostende.be

Stekene

Crammerock: Rock festival with Arid, The Human League, Triggerfinger, Gorki, Shameboy, Headphone, Kosheen, The Black Box Revelation, Tim Vanhamel, Pennywise and many more
SEP 5-6 in Stekene (East Flanders)
www.crammerock.be

Watou

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

INTERVIEW

Marc Waelkens

Professor Marc Waelkens is the director of the University of Leuven's Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project in the southwest of Turkey. The last few weeks have produced amazing finds in the ancient Roman city

You have been working on this site for 18 years now, is that right?

Yes, but in fact it has been a little bit longer because I started surveying with the British in 1986, then it became a Belgian excavation in 1990.

Out of all the places in the world to survey and excavate, why that site?

The very first year, I saw the potential that the site had. Because of its altitude, it was almost impossible to use as a stone quarry, so everything was still there, and you could see everywhere – buildings, all these buildings. Whole floor and roofs. The type of materials found in the survey also made it clear that this was a very interesting site. It was difficult to access, though, when we started; you couldn't even get there by car.

What date was Sagalassos built?

The city is from the third century BC. The monuments we've found were made anywhere from the third century BC to the 13th century AD. We also look at the whole territory that belonged to the city in the Roman times, and there we have evidence of occupation starting at 10,000 BC.

You've been there so many years, but the last few weeks have been very fruitful.

It was very exciting with these colossal statues that we found this month. The find of the head of the empress Faustina the Elder was made almost exactly one year after we discovered the remains of a colossal statue of the emperor Hadrian at a spot about six metres

away. Both the Hadrian statue and the Faustina head come from the largest room of the Roman Baths at Sagalassos, which have been under excavation for the past 12 years. The head of Faustina is 0.76 metres in height. These colossal statues were apparently very much in favour at Sagalassos.

And then just two weeks ago, you found remains of another huge sculpture, this time Marcus Aurelius.

In the early morning on 20 August, a pair of colossal legs turned up in the rubble, which also contained a right hand and an arm. The head clearly represents the young emperor Marcus Aurelius....His characteristic bulging eyes are half concealed by heavy eyelids, but the lentoid-shaped pupils make them gaze upward as if in deep contemplation – perfectly fitting for an emperor who was more of a philosopher than a soldier.

So these were all members of the same family?

Yes, they are members of the Antonine Dynasty, which presided over Rome's so-called silver age of the second century AD.

What is the significance of these finds?

The statues we've found are of emperors who correspond with the construction of the Roman baths; these were leaders in that same period. It's very rare that you find a complex like this representing an entire dynastic family. They are all represented at a young age, which means that the statue was made each time that an emperor came onto the throne. And the gigantic size is also remarkable. They



are also of extremely high quality. They were carved from marble that came from the white marble quarries located 300 kilometres to the north of Sagalassos. It was one of the major quarries of the ancient world. This new portrait of Marcus Aurelius is one of the nicest representations of him. But the best quality find is Hadrian's head; it's really the best portrait ever found of the emperor. We also have the feet of Sabina, Hadrian's wife, and part of the feet of Antonius Pius, the husband of Faustina.

Isn't this all a bit like an archaeologist's dream?

It's very exceptional, yes, very exciting. The group of 180 people that we have at Sagalassos, the site itself and the quality of the finds – all this combined is very exceptional.

Do you expect to find the bodies of the statues?

With Faustina, we have the arms and with Marcus we have a complete leg. What is missing is indeed the bodies, which were probably made of a different material. I don't expect to find them. I think they were made in bronze.

How long does it take between finding a head of nearly one metre and getting it out of the ground?

A complete nine-hour day because we don't want to hurt it, so we remove layers. Layer by layer.

Are there a lot of Belgians on the site?

It's completely international, a majority is Turkish. And then the second largest group is from Leuven.

Do you camp on the site or do you commute from a nearby town?

We stay in a nearby small city, just south of the site.

Do you constantly travel back and forth between Sagalassos and Belgium?

Normally I'm always there, but this year I'm dividing my time.

I hear you were recently granted knighthood by the king.

Yes. I wasn't expecting it. It was exciting because it's like an official recognition of what you've been doing.

Does the success of this project shine a positive light on archaeology in Belgium?

I think it does because, for instance, the other disciplines involved at Sagalassos have been united in archaeological sciences. We are now working on other projects together. It has also had a positive effect on the interest in archaeology among young people.

Is there an end in sight to this excavation?

I will stay there until I retire, and then someone else on the team will continue leading the excavation after me. We find new things all the time – thousands of pieces of pottery, glass, and other remains. We're working on different locations, and we're restoring whole buildings, so it's like a major enterprise. In the end, it will be a restored city. But it's another 15 years before a major building is complete.

Interview by Lisa Bradshaw

online
www.archaeology.org/interactive/sagalassos

THE LAST WORD

what they're saying in Flanders

Father figure

"I'm as concerned about my soldiers as I am about my own children."

Pieter De Crem
Belgian defence minister
on sending Belgian troops to
Afghanistan

Cool diet

"In the production of a thick steak, you emit 25 times as much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than in the production of a plate of vegetables and rice."

Rajendra Pachauri
economist (and vegetarian)
in Ghent recently to promote
a dietary approach to global
warming

Seeing again

"Before when I dropped something, I had to find it by touch. Now I look first then pick it up."

Yannik Duwé, 9, from Lennik
who is the sixth person in the
world to have his sight restored
by a revolutionary new process

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Women's Film Festival **Floralien**
Praalstoet **Meise Botanical Garden**
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