

Design me 7

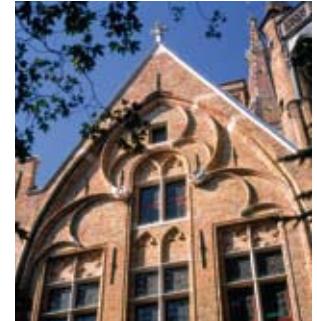
Both local and international architects are competing to win high-profile projects in Flanders and Brussels, including a centre for new media and an institute for Flemish audio-visual heritage in Ghent and a major office and leisure complex on the Heizel plateau

**Staging change** 8

Antwerp's Het Toneelhuis has turned the idea of classic municipal theatre on its ear by dispensing with a company, instead housing Flanders' best and brightest theatre-makers as collaborators. The productions speak for themselves

**Building an image** 11

In the 19th century, Bruges "re-branded", renovating its mediaeval centre – and building a few new buildings to merely look mediaeval. Anna Jenkinson takes a look at the architect who built mediaeval Bruges



“Some sort of masterpiece”

Through Art Nouveau and Art Deco, Belgium has historically been a European leader in architecture. What about now?

PAUL STUMP

There can be few countries in the world more defined by architecture and design than Belgium. Art Nouveau has effectively become the signature of Brussels, while Flanders has its innumerable stepped gables, leftovers from the centuries when, along with the Netherlands, it was one of the United Provinces. Belgium is a country in which the built environment is a continually eye-catching component of everyday life.

Between the wars, Belgian architects could and did sue each other for plagiarism. The distinguished British architec-

tural critic Jonathan Meades has described the suburbs of Brussels as "some sort of masterpiece". From the lavish townhouses of Elsene to the charming garden-city development of Watermaal-Bosvoorde in Brussels' south-east, it's hard to argue. Just how, then, are today's architects and designers contributing to a centuries-long tradition? Are there 21st-century analogues of Van de Velde, Horta and the like?

► *continued on page 5*



© Jan Termont

Belgians lose €30 million a year to online fraudsters

Belgian internet users last year lost €30 million to online fraud, according to the Computer Crime Unit (CCU) of the federal police. The increase in fraud goes hand in hand with the increase in online transactions, which last year reached six million, according to Ogone, which handles the majority of online payments in Belgium. That's a 33% increase on 2007, and a 28% increase in value, with €590m changing hands. And that doesn't include cross-border transactions, which would put the total at many times higher.

The number of complaints of fraud have gone up from 1,081 in 2006

to 3,248 in 2007, and 3,847 last year, the CCU said. However because local police are not obliged to specify amounts when the complaint is made, the CCU has little idea of the value of the fraud. From what they do know (233 of the 3,847 cases), 40% concern a figure lower than €250, and 8.3% more than €5,000. In one case, the damage was over €100,000. The number of cases cleared up and resulting in a conviction, meanwhile, is minimal.

The CCU gave out this advice to avoid becoming a victim of internet fraud:

► Use up to date anti-virus and fire-

wall software

- Carry out regular anti-virus scans
- Use a new password for each application and change it regularly
- Shop as much as possible on Belgian sites, making it easier for the police to track down fraudsters if they strike
- Try Googling the name of the seller to see if it is valid
- Don't pay by Western Union or Moneygram and don't accept cheques
- Use common sense. If a deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is. ♦

Prison strikes spread after deadly attack in Leuven

Inmate who stabbed officer shot dead

ALAN HOPE

The country's prison system was on the verge of descending into chaos this week as prison staff across Flanders, followed by Wallonia, took industrial action in support of their colleagues at Leuven Central.

On the evening of Thursday, 29 October, a prisoner at Leuven Central ran amok with a pair of scissors, stabbing a prison officer 12 times and wounding another member of staff and three prisoners. The man, Iran-born Hussein Mamiani, was joined by another prisoner who started attacking others with a stick. The two then shut themselves up in a cell while

holding a fellow prisoner hostage. Mamiani was later shot dead by the special intervention unit of the federal police, and 22-year-old Jimmy Hemeleers was taken into custody.

The incident was triggered when Mamiani, who was serving 22 years for the attempted murder of a doctor, learned that he was to receive a disciplinary sanction for an earlier argument with a prison guard. Hemeleers' participation in the incident appears to have been opportunistic.

► *continued on page 3*



CONTENTS

News 2 - 3

- News in brief
- Fifth Column: The Party President
- Antwerp hospital performs surgery on wrong patient

Feature 5

- Flemish architecture following in the footsteps of the masters

Focus 6

- Flemish travel agent opens cafes across the world

Business 7

- Architects line up to compete for high-profile projects
- Biz in brief

Arts 8-9

- Het Toneelhuis: envisioning an entirely different municipal theatre
- Bronks theatre festival for children

Living 11

- The architect who built Bruges to look mediaeval

Agenda 13-15

- The enduring allure of Morrissey
- Three pages of arts and events

Back page 16

- Face of Flanders: Renaat Braem
- Talking Dutch: our language expert looks at flesh and blood
- Bite: where the Swedish shop for food
- The Last Word: what they're saying in Flanders



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Derek Blyth

News in brief

The Centre for Equal Opportunities and the Fight Against Racism expects complaints of **racism on the internet** this year to top 500, compared to only 130 in 2006 when it began tracking the phenomenon. Hate speech against Muslims is a growth area, the centre said, citing the example of an email describing a "smiley gang" of Moroccans who allegedly rape and disfigure girls. The mail is "a pure invention," the centre said. Racists are also making more use of social media like Facebook and Netlog.

More than half of all families in Flanders have no idea how **much water they use** in a year, according to a poll by the motoring organisation VAB, which also has a home insurance department. And with only 42% knowing how much they consume, VAB said, most households are not making use of some simple tricks to keep water bills down: use economy shower-heads, fix leaking toilets and dripping taps, wash the car with a bucket of water instead of the hose, etc.

Six doctors and two nurses from the Bruges and Ostend area have been cleared of involuntary manslaughter by a court in Bruges. The eight were charged in connection with the death from a morphine overdose in 2001 of a 39-year-old former gendarme, who was found to have eight morphine plasters on his body. The plasters had been legally prescribed by a series of doctors, but while the court found there had been insufficient communication between the doctors, they had acted in good faith and within the law.

The start of the **winter season at Brussels Airport** last week saw the introduction of seven new destinations: Mombasa, Zanzibar, Costa Rica, Bratislava, Poprad (Slovakia), Kuusamo (Finland) and Boston. Other routes will see an increase in frequency.

Unions representing rail workers have **announced strike action** to take place this Thursday, 5 November, in protest at plans by the rail authority NMBS to hive off the loss-making freight service B-Cargo and make it an autonomous company. Unions say staff have been given no information about their futures once the divestment is carried out. B-Cargo lost €85 million last year, and is expected to lose €124m this year.

A hacker who threatened Belgacom that he would release the logins

Lunchtime-only chef is best in the land



© Bege

Herman, Van Damme and Goossens pictured at the launch of a new business venture earlier this year

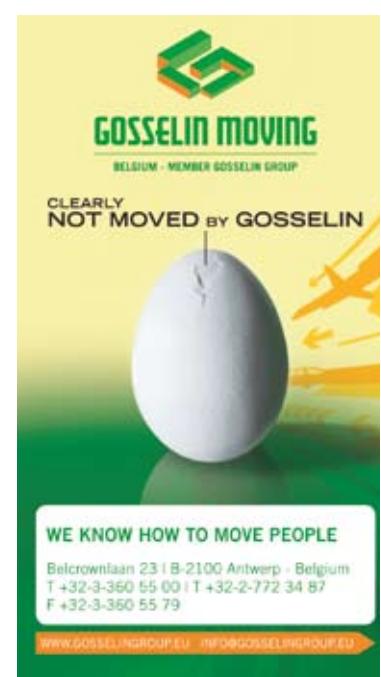
Roger Van Damme, head chef of the lunch lounge Het Gebara in Antwerp, was last week declared the country's top chef by the editors of the new edition of the *Gault Millau* guide, one of the two culinary bibles of the restaurant trade. Peter Goossens, chef of the Hof Van Cleve restaurant in Kruishoutem, is the country's highest-rated chef, holding on to his 19.5 points out of 20 for the seventh year in a row. But he was narrowly pipped at the post to the unprecedented score of 20/20 by his TV colleague and, together with Van Damme, business partner Sergio Herman of the restaurant Oud Sluis in Sluis, just over the border in Zeeland.

Van Damme, like Herman, was born in Sluis, but trained at the celebrated Ter Groene Poorte chef school in Bruges. His specialty is pastries, and he has become known as one of Europe's top dessert chefs. He took over Het Gebara, housed in the lodge of the Antwerp botanical gardens, in 1994. It was serving sandwiches and cakes, but Van Damme saw a demand for more substantial food and adapted the menu accordingly. One thing he didn't change, however: the restaurant is only open at lunch time. "Customers can have lunch until 16.00," he said. "Then that's enough. I have a wife and children, and I want to be home in the evening."

Some consolation for Goossens came from the editor of the Belgian section of *Gault Millau*, who declared he would never give a 20 to a Belgian restaurant, and that Goossens had no reason to feel inferior to Herman. Herman himself, whose restaurant in Sluis is so close to the Belgian border that his clientele is often more Flemish than Dutch, was said to be unhappy with the perfect score, which a psychologist consulted by *Het Nieuwsblad* described as "pure torture for a perfectionist".

Elsewhere, Goossens was joined in the top three by two Brussels restaurants, Comme Chez Soi and the Sea Grill of the Radisson SAS Hotel.

and passwords of thousands of internet subscribers if they did not review download limits (see *Flanders Today*, last week) has posted another 500 sets of confidential details on the web. The man, who calls himself Vendetta, has given the company until 30 November to comply and plans to publish more details weekly.





One violent attack a day in Belgium's prisons

→ continued from page 1

Prison staff stopped work immediately after the incident, and union action soon spread to other prisons in Flanders, as well as to the youth detention centre in Everberg. While other prisons returned to work soon afterwards, staff at Leuven Central decided to carry on their action until Monday.

Justice minister Stefaan De Clerck visited the prison for talks with staff and blamed the problems on overcrowding. At present, there are 10,400 men in prison in Belgium, some 2,000 more than full capacity. But Leuven Central is not overcrowded. While De Clerck's description of "more people and more pressure on staff that creates an atmosphere of anxiety" is true of many institutions, Leuven is in fact considered one of the easier prisons, where inmates are allowed to circulate freely and where there are many work and leisure activities organised. Overcrowding elsewhere, however, has created a dangerous situation, according to criminologist Brice De

Ruyver of Ghent University, quoted in *De Morgen*. According to De Ruyver, some 1,000 inmates currently in ordinary prisons should be detained in psychiatric institutions but are not for lack of available places, creating what he called "a gigantic risk". Mamiani, while identified as a sociopath, was not under an order to be committed to psychiatric detention.

This week, as Flanders Today went to press, staff at Leuven Central met to decide to continue their stoppage until 5 November at 10.00. Prison officer Sonja De Saedeleer, who was stabbed in the Leuven incident, remained in intensive care, but her condition was no longer said to be critical. Hemeleers, who is serving 30 years for a murder committed when he was 17, was transferred first to Hasselt and later to Bruges.

Meanwhile, staff at Ittre prison in Walloon Brabant, south of Brussels, voted by a large majority to strike until 11 November, the longest stoppage in the prison's history. In Ittre, where the

cells are full but not overcrowded, there have been four hostage-taking incidents in the past year, union leaders said.

According to unions, there is on average one violent incident in a Belgian prison every day, four times as many as in recent years. "Aggression is not only expressed towards prison officers; the atmosphere among detainees is becoming

more hostile," one representative said. The causes, according to the unions, include overcrowding, an increase in the number of prisoners from the former East bloc, the growth of gangs



Prison staff picket Leuven Central after the attack

in prisons and the removal from the system of model prisoners, who now come under electronic surveillance and who no longer exercise a moderating influence among the prison population. ♦

Antwerp hospital switches patients on operating table

Two men whose medical procedures were accidentally switched by an Antwerp hospital are both well and have been discharged, the city's health-care network (ZNA) said this week. One of the men was operated on by an urologist, although he had been admitted for another procedure entirely.

ZNA spokeswoman Renée Willems would not specify exactly what type of operation was carried out but confirmed earlier reports that "something was removed that cannot be restored". The urology surgeon involved was described as a "very experienced and conscientious specialist" at the Jan Palfijn Hospital.

The other man, who was supposed to have the operation, was taken into surgery for an examination carried out under general anaesthetic – the procedure

intended for the first man. He was later operated on for his own complaint. Both men were reported to be well. "This should never have happened," Willems said. "We regret it to the utmost. The families have been fully informed. We certainly did not keep anything from them." The ZNA made it clear that the two men are free to bring a complaint of medical malpractice against the hospital and the doctors involved, although so far neither has done so.

Urology is the branch of medicine covering the urinary system and, in men, the reproductive organs. Though the ZNA would not say what the operation precisely involved, it is most likely to have been a full or partial prostate removal, a procedure whose side effects can include incontinence and erectile dysfunction. ♦

Fare-dodgers face €250 fines, smokers up to €750

Train conductors will be given the power to demand identification from fare-dodgers and summon the police if necessary, and passengers travelling without a valid ticket could face fines of up to €250, under a new law proposed this week by the interior minister, Annette Turtelboom.

The measure comes after a judge in the police court in Verviers, Wallonia, last week acquitted a man who had run up four €200 fines for fare-dodging. According to the judge, the requirement to have a valid ticket on pain of a fine is contained in the terms and conditions of the use of the railways, but not in a law. To be able to levy such a high fine, he said, required legislation.

At present, the system of fines is an inefficient way of penalising fare-dodgers. In 2008, there were more than 250,000 cases detected, but only half of those people ever paid up. ♦

The new measure would take the question of fines for fare-dodgers out of the hands of the courts altogether, giving the rail authority NMBS the power to levy an administrative charge equivalent to a fine, such as has been the case for public transport authority De Lijn since 2007.

Train conductors would have the power to demand ID from passengers in order to write tickets for fines, and to call in the police if the passenger refuses. Fines of between €75 and €250 could be levied not only for fare-dodging but also for drunkenness, begging, parking offences on station territory and allowing animals to run free. A higher level of fine, up to €750, could be levied for anti-social behaviour such as vandalism, smoking or endangering other passengers. Repeat offenders could be banned from entering stations for a period of between 15 days and six months. ♦

→ www.b-rail.be

FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

The party's president

Party president is a tough job. Sure, there are perks. Presidents get to express the parties' views on different issues. When they speak, people listen – which is more than most politicians can dream of. It is also the president's job to decide who becomes minister. This is tricky, but it at least gives a sense of real power.

There are plenty of disadvantages. Presidents constantly have to balance different internal factions, generations and regions. They also have to be available for the media at all times. One blip, one mistake, may have serious consequences, not just for the president him or herself, but for the party as a whole.

Most presidents are elected by the parties' members, a process that is always interesting. The way the election is conducted tells us how parties see themselves, how they look back on their past and what they expect from the future. Socialist president Caroline Gennez, for example, had to ward off comments about a lack of internal democracy. These had little to do with her own attitude – after all, she still had to be elected – but more with the behaviour of her predecessors.

More than once, presidential elections were decided after one top party member – Bert Anciaux or Guy Verhofstadt, for instance – spoke out for their favourite candidate. Usually this candidate's opponent won.

Groen! has recently elected a new president, the relatively unknown Wouter Van Besien. This election was interesting, too, as Van Besien turned out to be the only candidate. More prominent party members shied away from the position, mostly because they were afraid it would be too demanding on their personal lives. In this way, they lived out their party's belief in lives that are not dominated by work alone.

Open VLD is also set for a presidential election. Its members get to choose between three candidates: Marino Keulen (former Flemish minister), Gwendolyn Rutten (former ministerial aide) and Alexander De Croo (son of former minister Herman De Croo). Open VLD is in bad shape: it has lost credibility with the voters, while the old generation of Verhofstadt and Karel De Gucht has moved on, leaving their party in disarray. The three candidates present themselves with two running mates each, thereby bridging the generations. Phew! That's at least one problem solved for the future Open VLD president.

THE WEEK IN FIGURES

60,000

titles of books on show at the Antwerp Boekenbeurs, which started at the weekend

22%

are literature and language, 20% children and youth, 20% health and wellness, 11% politics and history, 8% leisure and sport, 7% social and culture, 6% science and ecology and 5% management and business



41,193

people became infected with the A/H1N1 flu virus this week in Belgium, bringing the total number of cases so far to 75,000

0.7%

of the population has so far been infected. Experts expect the total to reach 20-30%

63.2%

of children aged between three months and three years regularly go to formal or informal day care, according to figures from the Catholic University of Leuven and Kind en Gezin.

1/5

young children is looked after by grandparents. Twenty years ago Oma and Opa looked after half of all children. Five years ago the figure was one in three

42,000

Blu-Ray disc players sold in Belgium by the end of the year, according to consultants GfK, three years after the technology, designed to take over from DVD, came onto the market

230,000

DVD players had been sold at the same stage of development in 2002. "Many consumers question whether the upgrade is worth it," a GfK spokesman said

934 million

payments by bank card this year, according to financial industry federation Febelfin, which wants to see the figure double by 2014 to nearly two billion

€29,000

damages paid by a couple from Hamont-Achel in Limburg to 14 film producers and distributors after they were convicted of making counterfeit DVDs

8,093

illegal aliens were deported in 2008, 2,669 of whom went willingly



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“Some sort of masterpiece”

Flemish architects need to use modernism to enhance, not obliterate, an illustrious past

→ *continued from page 1*

More than one distinguished commentator has advanced that view. But this must be weighed alongside a caution: compared to some European countries, including the Netherlands and Spain, Belgian planning regulations are relatively lax. This might enable architects to work within a less constrained milieu, but it is also as likely to give rise to undistinguished buildings as to good ones.

Certainly the star designers promoted by the Flemish Architecture Institute (VAI) seem to concentrate on renewing the old fabric of existing buildings, especially the interiors, with light the chief motivation – much as it was when Art Nouveau revolutionised the fenestration of Brussels’ town-houses around 1900.

A great deal of interesting work is also being undertaken in semi-urban locations, emphasising light and, where possible, the use of traditional materials for the interiors, mirroring the Flemish attachment to the countryside and the outdoors. Nu-Architecture’s private home “Mathilde” in the Ghent suburb of Ledeburg, for instance, is all rectilinear steel and glass, yet includes homey, old fashioned touches inside – a cosy, rural homestead in an area largely overcome by urban blight.

What is perhaps also significant is that all this small-scale work more than stands comparison with other undemanding, modernist-lite structures in Belgium, like the new Liège-Guillemins train station by star Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava or the feted law courts in Antwerp by British architect Richard Rogers. Flemish architects boast at least as much facility with invention but shun the often showy scale of these global figures; the Flemish architectural eye seems sure, at least, even if the scales in which they work do not always allow us to see their full potential.

Ilse Dierickx of VAI says, for example, that the simple elegance of Rechnum’s bridge for cyclists and pedestrians in Ostend is just as important as the fitness being practised on it. In other words, form is as valuable as function.



© Filip Dujardin

The artistic accessibility of the new Bronks theatre building near Sint-Katelijne in the centre of Brussels is reflected in its glass design by Martine Maeseneer Architects

Among the Flemish figures filling the urban gaps at present – in Belgium and beyond – are the Ghent firm Robbrecht and Daem and the Antwerp-based Vincent Van Duysen. The Lokeren-born Van Duysen has become as famous for his furniture and chic interiors – such as the women’s wear department of Selfridges in London – as for his full-scale buildings, located in cities from Beirut to Tokyo.

Van Duysen is the only Flemish architect I know who has a promo video on YouTube. He specialises in minimalism of the most agreeable kind, even to those who abhor the geometries of the International Style. Its calculated purity of line is the polar opposite of the extreme ornamentation that characterised Art Nouveau, but Van Duysen’s avowed belief is that objects should be as comfortable to look at as to sit in.

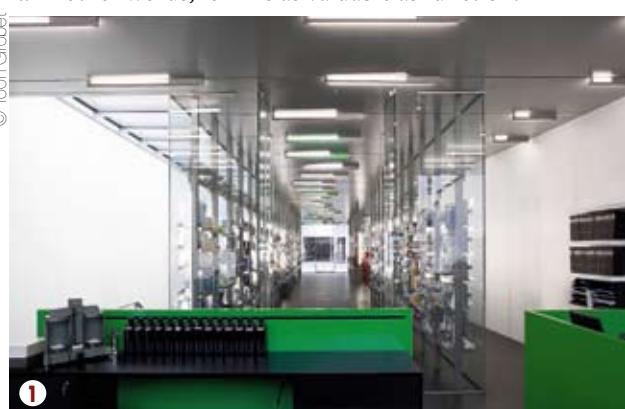
Not all of Flanders’ most visually pleasing developments are necessarily modern, or even modernist; witness the renovated Patershol quarter of old Ghent – old artisan dwellings, inns and coach houses redone as adult-scale models of textbook Flemish traditionalism. But they are nonetheless easy on the eye for this essential retrogressive tendency, which also finds a home in Dutch urban centres.

It’s probably pointless to hope for another transformation of Belgium’s inner cities as radical as that occasioned by Art Nouveau – social, material and artistic conditions have changed too much. But buildings like Robbrecht and Daem’s Concertgebouw in Bruges, for all its angular modernism that could be “anywhere”, have a cool authority and elegance which, while not catapulting Flanders or Belgium into the most visually singular of locations, lend a cultural relevance and respect for buildings as urban artworks.

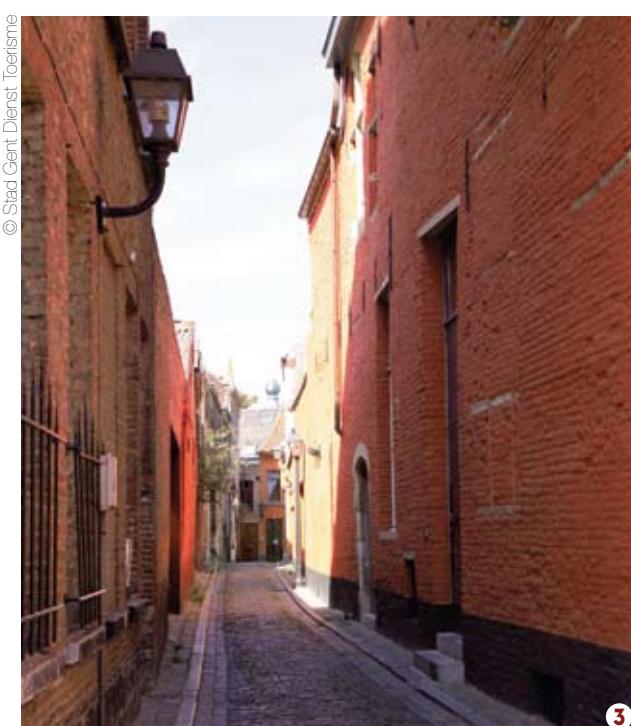
All who remember the merciless obliteration of the shops and bars on the Fonsnylaan side of Brussels’ South Station will hope that the more humane vision of the likes of Van Duysen and Co is given free rein in shaping the cityscape of Belgium’s capital. Neo-expressionism of the Le Corbusier stamp – deprecated as Brutalism by some – has not really asserted itself with any overweening presence or majesty as seen in London or Frankfurt.

Flemish architects as a whole seem more than capable of restoring Brussels’ cutting-edge status without ruining the vistas that made it the exemplar of another century’s bright new dawn. It is to be hoped that what novelty they summon can aspire to the originality of its illustrious predecessors and use modernism in a manner that renders it fit for purpose and visually memorable.

One need look only at Van Geystelen-Thys’ Regenboog primary school in Grimbergen and, on a much grander and more prestigious scale, Robbrecht and Daem’s splendid extension to the Whitechapel Gallery in London’s East End – a gem of the Arts and Crafts movement whose Flemish add-ons were unanimously praised by critics – for proof of the general health of architecture in a corner of Europe that has so much to live up to in terms of the past. ♦



1 - Apotheek De Vooght in Herentals by Open Architecten makes going to the chemist more of a shopping experience; 2 - the townhouses of Elenne continue to impress both residents and tourists; 3 - Ghent’s Patershol neighbourhood is a gem of urban renewal; 4 - an addition to a private home by Brussels architects BOB361 emphasises a smooth transition to the outdoors



4

Worldly ambitions

A Flemish-based travel café moves across the planet

STÉPHANIE DUVAL

There's no shortage of globetrotters these days.

Even in economically difficult times, travel agency Joker sees no drop in reservations in even the most expensive of their world travels on offer. "People want value for their money, and they are aware that not only are our prices fair, but our entire philosophy is based on fairness", explains Jan Baeten, co-founder of the Living Stone group, the organisation that owns and coordinates Joker Tourism.

Joker's approach is not that of a typical travel agency. For starters, the journeys are adventurous, to say the least. Groups of travellers set off to discover little-known areas of Ethiopia, to name just one of their recently added destinations. "The idea is that people travel in small groups to be able to really experience the local culture, instead

of just watching it from a tourist distance," says Baeten.

Joker also embraced the concept of ethical travelling long before it became a hype. The agency won the travel award for sustainable tourism two years ago.

But Joker has been around much longer. It started out as a collective of travel escorts specialised in global expeditions, employing several passionate people. One of them was Jos, who at the time ran a café in Leuven. He first came up with the idea of opening a travel-oriented café in 1994. The suggestion was received enthusiastically and became reality one year later in the form of the first Via Via café, which Jos still runs together with two colleagues.

"Today, a travel café doesn't seem so unusual," says Jos, "but 15 years ago there were relatively few. It was a new concept, and people took to it immediately."

12 ViaVia-reiscafés in de wereld



The Via Via cafe and bed and breakfast in Mali, top, and Indonesia, above

About the same time Jos laid down his idea with Baeten and Bob Elsen, the other co-founder of the Living Stone group, another enthusiastic response came in the form of Mie, who wanted to open a Via Via café in Indonesia. That was the first of many Via Via spots, positioned on opposite sides of the world. "It was always our goal to develop the Via Via concept into a worldwide network of locations," says Baeten. There are now cafés in Belgium, Central and South America, Africa and South Asia, all run by Belgians. Soon, two new cafés will open their doors: one in Chile in November, and one in Ecuador sometime next year. This will bring the total to 14 Via Via cafés, only two of which are based in Belgium.

The other is in Antwerp, run by Marlies and Jeroen Van Dijck, brother and sister. Appropriately, when I tried to reach them, I heard that Jeroen is travelling through Portugal. But Marlies is available, in between her shifts in the kitchen of their Via Via, where she creates the trademark world cuisine that make the place so popular.

"I started working here as a student, and I fell in love with the place," she remembers. "When the previous owners decided to pass on their business, I jumped at the chance." Marlies started

taking cooking classes and took over the role as chef, while her brother takes his place behind the bar.

Via Via cafés provide a casual atmosphere, where travellers can meet each other. But, according to Marlies, it's also "somewhere little old ladies come and have a coffee, and where students drink a beer. A lot of people come for the food, which is high quality but reasonably priced."

It seems a far cry from the café's original goal to educate people about world travelling and enable them to connect with like-minded globetrotters. In Antwerp, customers still sometimes venture to the back, where they can find a large selection of travel guides. But it's obvious that planning their next trip is not their main concern.

"The Belgian locations are different," explains Baeten. "In Leuven, we still frequently host evenings when Joker presents slide shows of foreign destinations or organises informative sessions about travelling with kids, for example." But it's up to the café manager to decide which cultural activities take place. Living Stone group owns one-third of the Via Via cafés, so each café owner has a certain amount of autonomy.

"Of course whenever we meet someone who is genuinely inter-

ested in starting a Via Via café, it automatically means they adhere to our philosophy," Baeten says. Living Stone group never starts from a certain location where they would like to open a café, but rather, waits until the right person with the right plan comes along.

"The goal behind Via Via is to enable and support Belgians to start their own business, either abroad or in Belgium," says Baeten. By opening a café in Africa or South America, Via Via not only creates a job for one or two Belgians – an average of 18 people are employed at each café.

The goal of the Belgian-based cafés is to broaden their clientele's horizons and introduce them to world food and cultures. In Antwerp, Spanish classes are offered; in Leuven, you can learn Spanish or Indonesian.

At the foreign locations, Via Via are more a meeting point for travellers, a source of information about the local destination. And many of them also have a bed and breakfast. "Many of our applicants already have a strong bond with a country and know a lot about the local region, and that is their main motivation to want to open up a café there," concludes Baeten. "To us, that's the best guarantee they are the perfect candidate." ♦

► www.viavia咖啡.com



Leisure and learning projects get the go-ahead

Architects line up to compete for developments in Ghent and Brussels

Two major architectural projects, one in Ghent and one in Brussels, took a step forward last week with the announcement of a short list of architects' practices who will contend for the projects.

The Ghent development, known as the Waalse Krook, is a multi-media cultural complex which will take up an area bounded by canals near the university and the Gent Zuid shopping centre. At one point the site was intended as a new music forum, and plans went all the way to the appointment of an architect, before financial and other problems put an end to the project.

The new complex will involve a restored Winter Circus – currently the location of an exhibition of photographs by star photographer Stephan Vanfleteren (see *Flanders Today*, last week) – as well as the new Library of the Future and a centre for new media. The Winter Circus, once doomed to demolition, will house an institute for the conservation of Flemish audiovisual heritage.

The project is expected to be completed in 2014 and is a cooperation between the city, the Flemish region, East Flanders province, Ghent University and the Interdisciplinary Institute for Broadband Technology. Former Ghent mayor Frank Beke chairs the association running the scheme.

The architects chosen are the Danish firm Schmidt Hammer Lassen; UNStudio, Amsterdam; Japan's Toyo Ito & Associates; Aranda Pigem Vilalta from Spain; Coussé & Goris; and THV Mateus Beel.

Aires Mateus Architecs of Portugal, which developed a cultural complex in Sines and the main



The Waalse Krook site in Ghent, bounded on two sides by water, showing the circular Winter Circus building

library in Lisbon, is bidding in partnership with Stéphane Beel Architects of Ghent. Similarly, Aranda Pigem Villata, which has worked on libraries in Barcelona and Aalter, is working in partnership with the Ghent-based Coussé & Goris.

Toyo Ito is best known in Flanders for the Bruges pavilion, constructed for culture year in 2002 and already up for a €250,000 restoration announced

last year. Schmidt Hammer Lassen have experience working on libraries in Denmark and Sweden, as well as the University of Aberdeen. The five competitors will be asked to submit plans, and a winner will be announced at the latest in mid-2010, according to the city's culture alderman Lieven Decaluwe.

→ www.dekrook.be

meanwhile...

In Brussels, eight architectural offices have been named as candidates for the development of a major office and leisure complex on the Heizel plateau. Of the 28 who submitted files for consideration, eight stood out, Brussels mayor Freddy Thielemans said, announcing the winners. They are:

- AS. Architecture-Studio
- DPA-Dominique Perrault Architecture
- De Architekten Cie-Royal Haskoning consortium
- Gregotti Associati International and Ramboll UK Ltd. consortium
- Sum Project ARUP & Partners International Ltd – BDO Atrio nv
- consortium
- Ingneria IDOM Internacional SA
- KCAP Architects & Planners
- OMA Office for Metropolitan Architecture

Arup/Sum are best-known in Belgium as having provided the alternative plan for the Oosterweel link to the Antwerp Ring, which resulted in a city referendum and the rejection of the original Lange Wapper viaduct plan. OMA is the office of celebrated architect Rem Koolhaas, who, apart from being responsible for the Ghent Forum and Seattle Public Library, will also be developing the restaurant facilities and open square to come in the Bozar complex in Brussels. KCAP built

the eye-catching Red Apple building in Rotterdam, as well as the Science City in Zurich, and the Royal Docks development in London.

The competition will concern a complex involving the following mandatory elements:

- a conference centre whose main hall provides a minimum of 3,500 seats
- a shopping centre of up to 100,000 square metres (almost twice the size of the Wijnegem shopping centre)
- a recreation and leisure centre incorporating sports facilities
- a concert hall seating 15,000, or twice as many as the Lotto Arena in Antwerp
- green spaces

Finally, the competition calls for plans for a 60,000-seat stadium, which is new: when the plans for the Heizel were announced in March, there was no mention of a stadium.

When, and indeed whether, it will appear is another matter. The go-ahead is contingent on Belgium's success in its bid to host the 2018 World Cup. If that bid is successful, there will be no time to build a new stadium, so the existing Koning Boudewijn stadium will be given a facelift. If Belgium loses the World Cup, construction can go ahead.

In addition to those mandatory elements and the stadium, the complex would feature accommodation, "administrative areas", a hotel complex and parking. The "administrative areas" may be a bone of contention. An initial plan to house offices of the EU on the plateau was severely criticised, not least because there are currently about two million square metres of office space in the Brussels area lying vacant.

Local people, meanwhile, have expressed concern that the development will lead to traffic congestion in their area. Shops are worried about

the arrival of a major shopping centre. According to the Brussels Environment Council (BRAL), the views of locals are not being taken into account. The city, meanwhile, promised that the architects chosen would take full account of the views of local people.

Two of the eight offices will be chosen by a jury in March on the basis of the plans submitted, after which the development can start. The cost is estimated to be between €600m and €700m.

→ www.neobrussels.com



A satellite photo of the Heizel plateau showing the area to be developed in pink, on two sides of the avenue leading to the Atomium. The stadium is in the western area, along with Kinepolis and Bruparc

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Air • Brussels Airlines

Brussels Airlines, the Belgian carrier owned by Germany's Lufthansa, has signed a code-share agreement with Portuguese TAP to develop traffic between the two countries. It is also considering acquiring an additional Airbus long-haul jet for its African network.

Banking • Creafin

Creafin and Silver Finance, the Belgian affiliates of the failed Dutch bank DSB, are rumoured to be seeking a buyer for their activities. Silver Finance operates seven branches in Belgium, while Creafin manages some 2,000 mortgages.

Business • Trends

The National Bank's composite indicator of future business trends was again higher in October, its seventh consecutive increase. The indicator is often considered a reliable measure for future trends in the Eurozone because of Belgium's small size and export-driven economy.

Carpets • Oriental Weavers

Oriental Weavers, a leading Egypt-based industrial carpet manufacturer, is seeking to acquire up to three Flemish textile companies to develop its production capacity.

Chemicals • Tessenderlo

The chemical company Tessenderlo Group is to build a gelatin production unit in Brazil to strengthen its position. Tessenderlo is currently the world's third-largest manufacturer in the field.

Electronics • Media Markt

German-owned appliances and electronics group Media Markt has opened a new store in Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe, its fifth in the Brussels area.

Energy • Maxgreen

Electrabel, the energy group, has entered a joint venture called Maxgreen with Ackermans & van Haaren, the Antwerp-based financial holding company. The new firm is expected to invest up to €500 million to develop renewable energies. Its first €125 million investment involves the transformation of the electricity generating plant at Rodenhuize, near Ghent. It will be converted from a coal-fired plant to one using wood pellets to supply up to 320,000 households in the area.

Energy • North Sea Power

North Sea Power, the Dutch-owned energy producer, has won the concession to build up to 60 windmills in the North Sea, some 30 kilometres offshore from Knokke. The new wind farm, expected to come on stream in 2013, will meet the energy requirements of some 350,000 households.

Energy • Tractebel

Tractebel, the engineering affiliate of energy group Electrabel, has won a €5 million consulting contract from the Saudi Electricity company. The contract involves streamlining Saudi Arabia's electricity flows.

Insurance • Fortis Holding

Fortis Holding, the insurance company, is to sell its activities in Russia as part of the streamlining of its international operations.

A contemporary classic

BEN AM NVE
RAYNICK
WAYN TRAUB
SIDI LARBI
ERKAOUI
OLYMPIQUE DRAMATIQUE GUY
CASSIERS
LEKLOER
VANDENBERG
HARTE
HAZINGH
WAT
LARBI
ERKA
OUL
PIQUE DRAMA
HOL
TRIFIK
KJELAS
SILSOU
LYANDU
NBER
GARTEN
MANZ
BENJA
V
GBENJA

Antwerp's Het Toneelhuis bucks the municipal theatre system

REBECCA BENOOT

When Pierre Bourla designed his Antwerp theatre in 1827, little did he know that it would eventually house a revolutionary company. Diverse and politically grounded, Het Toneelhuis is a pioneer, not only in the local contemporary theatre scene but also worldwide, leaving the conventional idea of a theatre troupe behind to create an entirely new multi-disciplinary model.

The Théâtre Royal Français, named after its resident theatre company, opened its doors in 1834 but would go down in history as the Bourla theatre. With 900 seats, it's not Antwerp's largest theatre, and it's not even its oldest, but it is its most cherished due to the magnificent Neo-classical architecture. A circular front supported by columns, with statues of the nine muses on the rooftop, gives way to an interior with arched ceilings intricately decorated with beautiful mosaics and enormous chandeliers that exude all the grandeur and sophistication of the theatre's 19th-century clientele.

In 1932, the Koninklijke Nederlandse Schouwburg (or Royal Dutch Theatre) took up residence in the Bourla. Not long after, the theatre became a protected monument. However, as the popularity of theatre in general went

into decline, so did the building. In 1980, the Dutch Theatre moved out, and the building became abandoned.

Finally, the city of Antwerp decided to renovate, restoring Bourla's original interior (which had been largely altered in the 1860s). The Bourla reopened in 1993, and the Dutch Theatre returned. In 1998, they merged with Blauwe Maandag Companie (Blue Monday Company) and became Het Toneelhuis.

Luk Perceval, founder of Blue Monday, became Het Toneelhuis' first artistic director. Legendary Flemish actor Josse de Pauw took over in 2005 but passed on the torch to long-time theatre director Guy Cassiers the following year.

Born in Antwerp, Cassiers had left his directorial mark on a number of theatres in Flanders and the Netherlands, most notably winning awards for his productions with Rotterdam's RO theatre. Drawn to the possibilities of cross-media aspects, he is best known for his ingenious integration of music and film technologies on stage.

Cassiers steered Het Toneelhuis in an entirely new direction. He moved away from the classic municipal theatre model in which each theatre has its own troupe and permanent director, instead inviting six Flemish perform-

ance artists to take up residence with him in the Bourla. "What we're aiming for is not only special for Belgium; people in foreign countries are also interested in the concept, in the rethinking of a city company," he says.

Out of adversity

"We started three years ago at the same time as the Belgian elections, which is important," says Cassiers, referring to Flanders' shift to right-wing politics. "Things were changing rapidly in Antwerp, politically speaking, due to, for instance, the Vlaams Belang, which got a lot of votes. For us, it was important to take a stand."

That they did. Cassiers' first production at Toneelhuis was *Mefisto For Ever*, the first of the *Triptiek van de macht* (Trilogy of Power), which explores the complex relationship between art, politics and power. Adapted by Tom Lanoye, the story about a theatre director who collaborates with the Nazis was adapted from Klaus Mann's novel *Mephisto*.

"I think we have a political responsibility as artists. We wanted to imprint that responsibility in the form of our company," explains Cassiers.

Cassiers may be mayor of this small town called Het Toneelhuis, but he wouldn't have got anywhere without his fellow citizens. The original six collaborators are: Renaissance man Benjamin Verdonck, long used to turning city of Antwerp into one large urban project; choreographer and dancer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui; playwright and filmmaker Wayn Traub; Lotte van den Berg, with her brilliant site-specific performances; De Filmfabriek, headed by Peter Missotten, which specialises in multi-media projects, and the entire company of Olympique Dramatique, four lads whose work is unabashedly physical, comic and, occasionally, violent.

Probably the best example of the power of collaborative influence is their first season's *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*, based on the novel by British author Julian Barnes in which he combines fact and fiction to create an alternate reality. This unique project became a true phenomenon, mainly due to the life-sized aquarium produced by Missotten, which took centre stage in a climatic drowning scene enacted by Olympique Dramatique. Cherkaoui, Traub and Van Den Berg assisted in making this performance about art and destruction a revolutionary spectacle.

Although the seven artists of the Toneelhuis continue to assist and influence each other, they mostly produce their own projects. This means that no Toneelhuis production is quite like the last.

"We focus on the importance of diversity," says Cassiers. "Our seven artists all start from a different discipline. In that sense, you can say that we are a miniature city where we respect the differences of the others and try to see how, by living together, we can create something new."

As with any other community, people move in and out. With the departure of Van den Berg, Cherkaoui and Traub, who are all starting



© Maarten Vanden Abeele

their own companies, Toneelhuis is welcoming playwright and poet Bart Meuleman and writer/actor Abke Haring.

Selecting "inhabitants" can't be easy; so how did Cassiers go about it? "The quality of their work is the most important thing," he states.

The heart of Toneelhuis is the Bourla Theatre, but that doesn't mean that every artist has to work inside it. "The big stage is for large-scale performances, but an artist like Benjamin Verdonck looks at the theatre from the point of view of an outsider, and it's also important for us to have those kinds of artists who go into the city and create a direct dialogue with passers-by."



Guy Cassiers' *Mefisto For Ever* was invited to the inimitable Festival d'Avignon: "A kind of theatre we seldom get to see," said Radio 1

Cassiers' novel approach

Guy Cassiers' own work, on the other hand, is also quite distinctive. He often bases his work on novels with solitary figures, and he regularly uses film and video installations, which creates a flowing mix between classical and contemporary. "It has to be relevant today; the theme is more important than the form," he says of his plays. "I read a lot, and novels give me plenty to work with. The way we are influenced today by all kinds of other media creates more possibilities to develop a form of theatre



Toneelhuis artistic director Guy Cassiers turned its formula inside-out



Antwerpenaars are decidedly pleased with Pierre Bourla's 19th-century Neo-classical masterpiece, which in 1994 won the Europa Nostra Award for renovation

that is not only based on dialogue but also on monologues and on the thoughts of the characters."

Cassiers integrates these influences, but he strives not to reproduce. Rather, he wants to "deconstruct the elements and use them in a completely different way. By deconstructing the form and the language, I hope the spectator can reconstruct the image in his own mind. Every work I develop is to stimulate the artist inside the spectator."

Cassiers is also fond of taking on big projects and scaling them into pieces. Right now he's working on a stage adaptation of *The Man Without Qualities*, the whopping 1930 three-volume book by Austrian writer Robert Musil. The first of the trilogy will premier next summer in the Bourla. "In a way, it is about re-creating Europe," says Cassiers. "The book takes place at the beginning of the First World War, but there are so many similarities with today's political situation that I think it's important to review the content."

Het Toneelhuis also frequently hosts visiting companies; this season, KVS, NTGent, De Roovers and Music Theatre Transparent will all grace the stage. Most of Toneelhuis' original works are in Dutch, but, depending on the company, you'll also find English and French-language theatre.

Even though Het Toneelhuis takes all its productions on tour, both nationally and internationally, a lot of non-natives attend the performances in Antwerp due to the intoxicating location. Attending a performance in the Bourla satisfies a desire for the timeless glory of the theatre – mahogany, velvety seating, surrounded by statues of ancient muses – while providing extremely contemporary productions and modern adaptations.

The same can be said for the building's bar, De Foyer, a majestic Antwerp landmark on its own. Eat and drink under its stained-glass dome, decorated with flowers and fruits. It's the perfect ending to a stylish night out. ♦

→ www.toneelhuis.be

Where the wild things are live

The exceptional Bronx Festival introduces theatre to kids

MARIE DUMONT

Witty, inspiring and bursting with imagination, the annual Bronx Festival, which kicks off this Friday in Brussels, is a superb opportunity to tear kids away from computer and television screens and introduce them to the magic of live theatre. Dozens of productions from Belgium and elsewhere will bear witness to the genre's extraordinary vitality. Those who expect simpering variations on Mary Poppins are in for a shock.

The programme, curated by artistic director Oda Van Neygen, is an eclectic jumble of styles and themes, the only common point being that none of the productions talk down to children. All ages are catered for: preschoolers will be enchanted by Tof Théâtre's *Premiers pas sur la dune* (First Steps on the Dune), a gentle maritime fable happening inside a

gilded picture frame and featuring a tiny rubber duck as protagonist. Their elder siblings, meanwhile, will be invited to ponder the fate of migrants sent back to their countries of origin in *Enkele reis* (One-way Ticket), a house production based on the award-winning French novel *Un Aller simple*.

While some shows tap into age-old myths and stories (like tg Winterberg's *Alice*, a cross between *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*), others have their feet firmly planted in the modern world. The interactive Kroes uses new technologies to conjure up a virtual 3D environment, which the young viewers shape as they go along. The sobering *Mondays*, meanwhile, meditates on the recent wave of shooting sprees in schools.

Most productions are in Dutch,

but the festival stages a few shows in French as well as a number of pantomimes in which the music, sets and actors' gestures speak for themselves. Take Het Paleis' *Danske*, a wordless show that delves into children's games, silly walks, wild dances and other hieratic playground rituals.

The event is split between different venues around the capital, including Leopoldpark in the European quarter and a grand, faded mansion in Schaerbeek that will serve as a backdrop for a poignant meditation on dashed dreams and the passing of time (*Studio Orka's Berninna*).

Many productions, however, take place in Bronx' brand new theatre on Varkensmarkt in downtown Brussels. Long awaited by Van Neygen and her staff and finally inaugurated last March, it is a bright and airy building with

Open season

A typically mind-blowing programme awaits at Toneelhuis

Under the Volcano, based on British novelist Malcolm Lowry's 1940s masterpiece, is a trademark Guy Cassiers adaptation combining literature and video installation. Josse de Pauw is awe-inspiring as Geoffrey Firmin, a British consul in Mexico whose world starts to crumble after a disastrous love affair and one too many mezcals. Love, booze and sublime performances share centre stage with original footage shot in Mexico. **Running now in Antwerp**

Olympique Dramatique will combine noise, pathos and cruelty in their adaptation of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. This seriously alternative performance will shock and amaze, which is generally the best way to describe most of what this company does. The bard's most horrific play like you've never seen it before. **Premieres in Brussels on 6 November**



Fear of the unknown and a little audience participation are the key elements in **De Filmfabriek**'s makeover of Belgian writer Maurice Maeterlinck's one-act play *The Intruder*. This performance thrives on its threatening atmosphere combined with a truly bizarre tale and Peter Missotten's distinctive installations. **Premieres in March, 2010**

Bart Meuleman collaborates with Olympique Dramatique for *In the Penal Colony*, inspired by Franz Kafka's short story about an exquisite death trap. By deconstructing this multi-layered and politically-charged story, Meuleman gets the chance to prove that he is an exceptional addition to Het Toneelhuis. **Premieres in April, 2010**

One of the most anticipated events of this season, however, is without a doubt the first part of **Cassiers'** adaptation of Austrian author Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities*. Ulrich, played by long-time television and stage actor Vic de Wachter, is the title character in this epic political satire set in 1913 Vienna, seasoned with a dash of romance. **Premieres in June, 2010**



© Jespers en Jespers



© Florence Delahaye

a giant window in lieu of façade, a café, workshops, open rehearsals and quirky installations (see photo, page 5). Kids can try the Human Jukebox, essentially a guitarist trapped inside a box who will play thousands of songs on demand. Forget computer games – your children will probably think it the coolest place on earth. ♦

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Hoodwinked

How Bruges transformed itself into a mediaeval village in the 1870s

ANNA JENKINSON

How many guidebooks have you seen that refer to Bruges as a perfectly preserved mediaeval city? The capital of West Flanders certainly looks like a medieval city, and its original Gothic buildings were an important factor in the historic centre becoming a World Heritage site in 2000. Yet much of the architecture in Bruges is in fact neo-Gothic and dates from the end of the 19th century.

In Bruges' Gruuthuse Museum, a new exhibition on the city and on one of its most important – if little-known – architects, Louis Delacenserie, throws a spotlight on how Bruges used the Gothic Revival to reshape its image.

Bruges realised that the rise of cultural tourism could help the city out of an economic slump and, around 1870, launched what in today's language would be termed a "re-branding exercise". The "white city", with its Neo-classical style of straight mouldings and white plaster covering the old brick facades, gave way to a new style that restored the city's medieval character.



The inventor: Delacenserie

"It is during this period that the myth was created of Bruges as an authentic mediaeval city, with its history set in stone," says Yves Roose, the city's alderman for culture and education.

The choice of neo-Gothic chimed with the times as there was a general fascination in Europe with "the glorious past"; for Bruges, this meant the Middle Ages when the town was an important trading centre. Parades and commemorations were held in the city, reflecting a yearning for times gone by and creating what the museum calls "an ideal breeding ground" for the historicising architectural style.

Advocates of the neo-Gothic style included James Weale, a figurehead in the city's English colony; Bruges resident Adolf Duclos; and architect and archaeologist Karel Verschelde. Documents of all three men are on show, including detailed drawings of Bruges' facades by Verschelde, the first person to distinguish three types of facades in the city and catalogue their most important features.

It is Delacenserie, however, who takes centre stage, as the exhibition's title, *The Invention of Bruges: City of Delacenserie* makes clear. The show also marks the 100th anniversary of his death. Bob Van Reeth, former master architect of the Flemish Community, admits in an interview screening at the show that he hadn't actually heard of Delacenserie. "A complete gap in my knowledge," he says. "But whoever walks around Bruges comes across him." In other words, you may well not have heard of his name, but you will most probably be familiar with his buildings.

One of Delacenserie's major works in Bruges is the Provincial Palace on the central market square, the Markt. This commission arose after a fire broke out on 20 February 1878. Rumour has it that the people of Bruges didn't exactly over-exert themselves to rescue the unpopular, Neo-classical building from burning to the ground. Once gone, the way was open for a "more suitable" style.



The Gruuthuse Palace, where the exhibition is held, was the biggest and longest project in the architect's career

Delacenserie worked on the designs along with provincial architect René Buyck; the new building had to include a post office and telegram office, the national archive and the Administration for Public Roads and Bridges. (In the 1960s, the city briefly considered demolishing the Provincial Palace but ultimately decided against it.)

Another important Delacenserie building is the venue for the exhibition itself – the Gruuthuse Palace. The restoration of the building, named after the family that made its fortune selling *gruit* (an herbal mixture used prior to hops in brewing beer), was the biggest and longest project in the architect's career. His designs for the facades and the interior, such as his coloured plans for the flooring, are also on display.

The museum has put together a booklet in Dutch, available at the entrance, with a walk through Bruges highlighting some of Delacenserie's most significant buildings, such as the private home "De Rode Steen" on Jan van Eyckplein, which was restored based on the architect's designs. The house was the first to make use of "artful restoration" subsidies, which were available to individuals as long as certain style rules were applied.

Not all of Delacenserie's buildings are in Bruges. One of the best known is perhaps Antwerp Central Station; the original design plan of 1897 is on display in the room dedicated to the architect. Here

you can also find pictures of many of Delacenserie's works, each marked as to whether it was a new build, restoration, artful restoration or interior design.

The exhibition is divided into four rooms, concentrating on the historical context around 1870, Delacenserie himself, the Gruuthuse and the Provincial Palace and, finally, architecture in Bruges from Delacenserie's death through to the present day.

And if after all that you want some further reading, you could always pick up Georges Rodenbach's 1897 novel *Le Carillonner* about the restoration of Bruges at the end of the 19th century, especially as its protagonist is considered by many to have been inspired by Delacenserie himself. ♦

The Invention of Bruges: City of Delacenserie

Until 25 April

Bruggemuseum-Gruuthuse
Dijver 17, Bruges

→ www.uitvindingvanbrugge.be



Although not in Bruges, Antwerp Station is probably Delacenserie's best-known work



Delacenserie also worked on other structures, like the foot of this statue of revolutionaries Jan Breydel and Pieter De Coninck, which still stands in the Markt

I left my heart in Neo-classical

Delacenserie's success was mainly due to his work restoring mediaeval Bruges, both through his restoration of authentic mediaeval buildings and new-build projects in the neo-Gothic style. Yet, there are signs he may have preferred Neo-classical architecture.

In his will, which is on display in the exhibition, Delacenserie left 6,000 Belgian francs to enable the town council to launch an architecture competition focussing on the classical style – an interesting specification for the man so closely associated with Gothic buildings.

Then again, he did have Neo-classical training at the Bruges Academy of Fine Arts and, soon after graduating as an architect, Delacenserie won the Grand Prix de Rome, an architectural prize that allowed him to travel to Greece and

Italy to study classical architecture. His first work experience was as an assistant to the Ghent architect Louis Roelandt, a key figure in the Belgian Neo-classical movement.

Back in his native Bruges, where he became town architect in 1870, some of the first buildings Delacenserie designed were for a Neo-classical district being built around the new theatre.

"We will never know for sure which architectural style Delacenserie preferred," admits assistant curator Katrijne Vertogen. "On the one hand, the quality of his work and his attention to detail suggest the architect genuinely liked the fashionable neo-Gothic style, and yet his training and the bequest in his will can't be ignored either."

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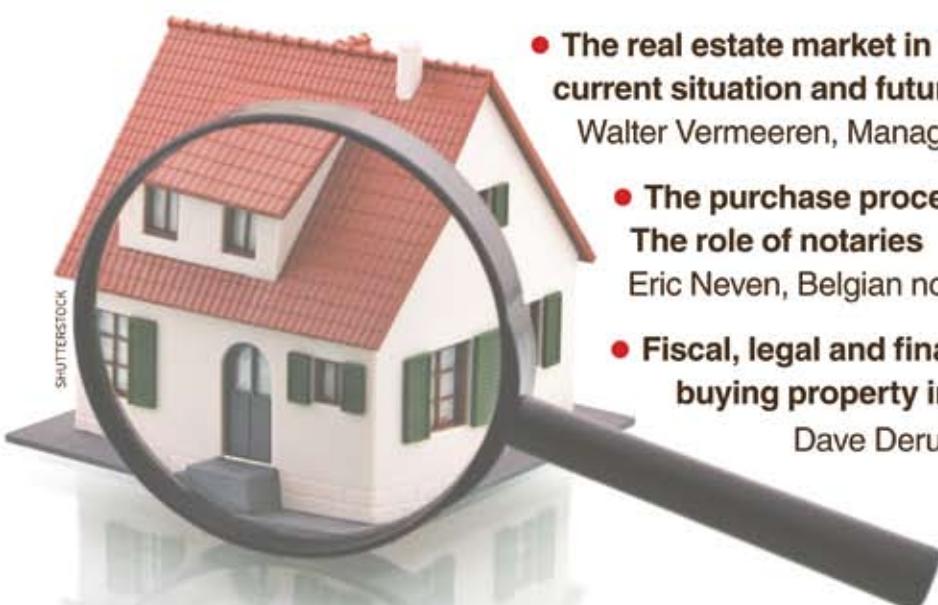
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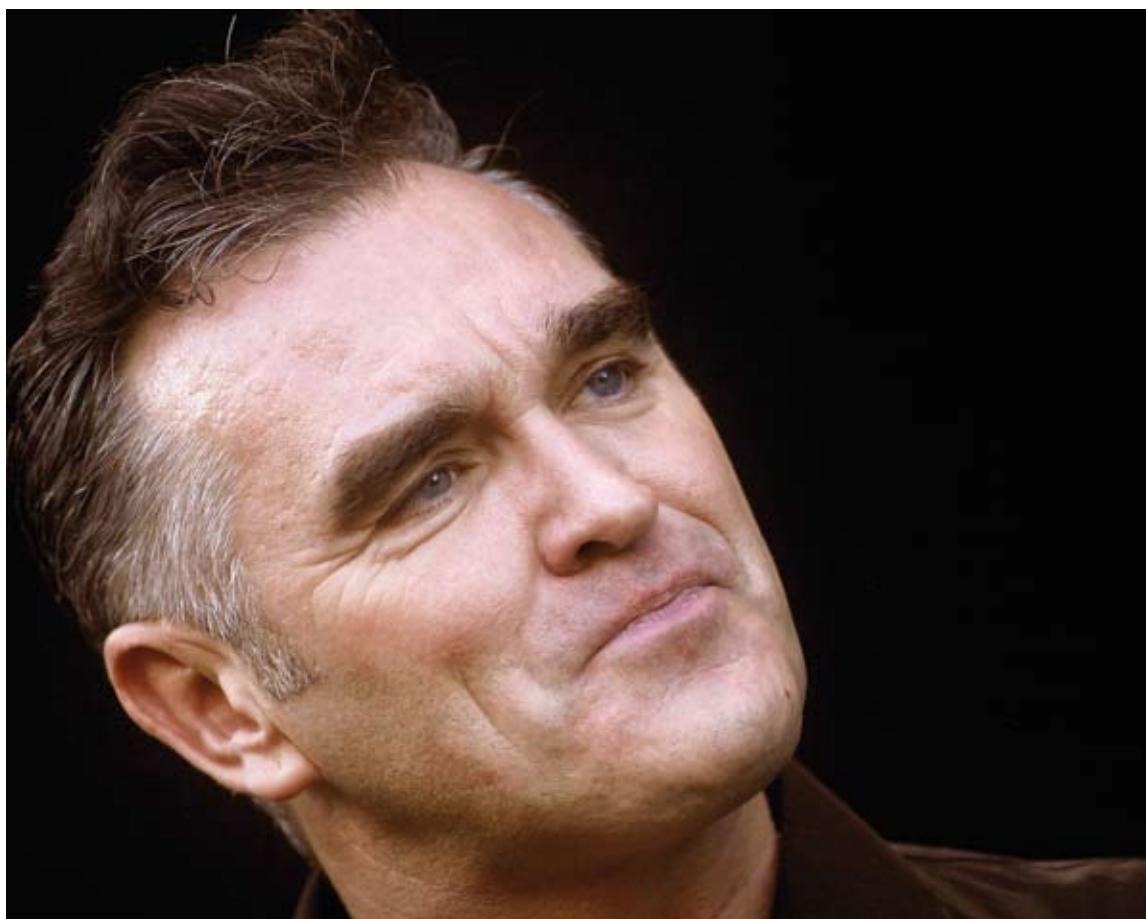


- The real estate market in Belgium: current situation and future prospects
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- The purchase process – The role of notaries
Eric Neven, Belgian notary
- Fiscal, legal and financial implications of buying property in Belgium
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Morrissey

PM DOUTRELIGNE

While most artists use B-sides (or CD-single bonus tracks, for those too young to remember vinyl) as an easy way to flog inferior material, Morrissey has always regarded them at the very least as the equal of album tracks. Sometimes, they were even better.

One of The Smiths' era-defining anthems, "How Soon Is Now?", first appeared on a B-side before turning into a firm classic. Following the seminal band's split in 1987, Morrissey saw no reason why he should behave any differently as a solo artist, and hidden gems such as "Hairdresser On Fire", "Jack The Ripper" and "The Loop" soon became mainstays of his live shows.

Here is a singer who always despised convention. In 1999 he embarked on – and sold out – a world tour with no new material to promote and no record company to back him.

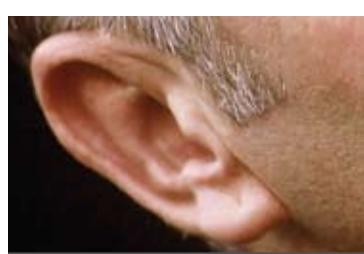
Ten years on, he's back – not that he ever went away – with a second European tour in a year, this time promoting *Swords*, an 18-track compilation of B-sides released

between 2004 and 2009. Perhaps not unsurprisingly, it is miles better than this spring's highly uneven studio album, *Years Of Refusal*. And while the likes of "I Knew I Was Next" or "Christian Dior" don't exactly set the world on fire, most contemporary bands would kill to be able to write songs as catchy as "Good-Looking Man About Town", as beguiling as "Ganglord" or as stunningly beautiful as "My Life Is A Succession Of People Saying Goodbye".

Morrissey, once the undisputed champion of working-class teenage angst – and unkindly dubbed the "Pope of Mope" by those aghast at his occasional miserabilism – is now a slightly greying 50-something whose eagerness to take people, and the media, by surprise remains undiminished.

It is therefore reasonably safe to assume that this Brussels gig won't consist exclusively of B-side material and assorted obscure songs, but will also include a few of his chart hits ("Irish Blood English Heart", "The First Of The Gang To Die"), as well as several Smiths classics.

The second night of this European tour saw him collapse after one song, resulting in being stretchered off the stage, then hospitalised... but normal service was resumed three days later – with a resounding performance at London's über-prestigious Royal Albert Hall, no less.



14 November, 20.00

Vorst Nationaal
Victor Rousseaalaan 208
Brussels

► www.vorstnationaal.be



MORE ROCK THIS WEEK

Muse → *Sportpaleis, Antwerp*

D-A-D → *Handelsbeurs, Ghent*

The Rifles → *Trix, Antwerp*



Antwerp

Queen Elisabeth Hall
Koningin Astridplein 26; 0900.26.060,
www.proximusgoformusic.be
NOV 10 20.00 Yes

Sportpaleis
Schijnpoortweg 119; 0900.26.060,
www.sportpaleis.be
Until NOV 11 20.30 Night of the Proms 2009, featuring Roxette, Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark, Sharon den Adel and more
NOV 5 20.30 P!nk

Berchem

CC Berchem
Driekoningstraat 126; 03.286.88.20,
www.ccberchem.be
NOV 12 20.30 Frank Vander Linden

Borgerhout

Trix
Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00,
www.trixonline.be
NOV 5 19.30 Woods + The Cave Singers + Espers NOV 6 20.00 The Rifles + Jersey Budd. 22.00 Coki & Mala + Pinch + Headhunter Live + Noah D + Hijak + Dice & Kastor + Cal & Sikey + Science + Sgt Pokes NOV 7 21.30 Gov't Mule NOV 11 20.00 The Heavy NOV 12 19.00 Anti-Flag + Alexisonfire + Four Year Strong + The Ghost of a Thousand

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24,
www.abconcerts.be
Concerts at 20.00:
NOV 4 Forro in the Dark NOV 5 Luz Casal. Rat records Event #4 with MoHa! + Chaos of the Haunted Spire NOV 6 Wilco NOV 7 Vive La Fête. Hairglow NOV 8 Bedroom Community with Ben Frost, Nico Muhly, Sam Amidon, Valgeir Sigurdsson NOV 9 Adept + Dance Gavin Dance + A Skylit Drive. Renan Luce. Stardeath and White Dwarfs + Flaming Lips NOV 11 Andromeda Mega Express Orchestra, The Notwist. A-HA. Moiano. Maxwell

DON'T MISS

A Survivor from Warsaw

6 and 8 November
Bozar, Brussels

Arnold Schoenberg never experienced the Warsaw ghetto first-hand; an Austrian Jew, he had fled Europe when Hitler came to power in 1933. But, forever haunted by the horrors of the Holocaust from his Californian refuge, he composed a cantata about it: *A Survivor from Warsaw*, a harrowing if historically flawed testimony in English that reaches a catharsis of sorts when a group of Jews on their way to the gas chambers intone a traditional prayer. The work will be performed by De Munt Symphony Orchestra under Dutch conductor Lawrence Renes (*pictured*), with the steely voiced baritone Dietrich Henschel performing the solo. It will be followed by Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, another powerful and strangely soothing meditation on death.



► www.bozar.be

Vorst-Nationaal
Victor Rousseaalaan 208; 0900.00.991
NOV 5 20.00 Motörhead NOV 7 20.00 Wintersleep + The Maccabees + Editors
NOV 11 20.00 Moby NOV 8 19.00 Cliff Richard & The Shadows NOV 12-13 20.00 Calogero

Ghent

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060,
www.vooruit.be
NOV 10 20.00 Rock & Roll Masterclass: Dick Dale

Hasselt

Muziekodroom
Bootstraat 9; www.muziekodroom.be
NOV 7 20.30 Beastfest European Tour 2009 with Caliban + Suicide Silence + Emmure + Maroon + After the Burial!
NOV 12 20.30 RJ Mischo & His Red Hot Bluesband

Kortrijk

De Kreun
Jan Persijnstraat 6; 056.37.06.44,
www.dekreun.be
NOV 6 20.00 Themselves + Foreign Beggars + Shadowanimals DJ
NOV 8 20.00 Do Make Say Think + Years + The Happiness Project + DJ Kurt
NOV 12 20.00 Mariee Sioux + Matt Bauer + DJ Ayco Duyster

Leuven

Het Depot
Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03
NOV 6 20.00 Mayer Hawthorne and the County
NOV 11 20.00 Yo La Tengo

©Marco Borggrave

Ostend

Kursaal (Casino)
Monacoplein 2; 070.22.56.00,
www.kursaalostende.be
NOV 9-10 20.00 Frans Bauer

Ternat

CC De Ploter
Kerkstraat 4; 02.582.44.33,
www.ccdепoter.be
NOV 6 20.30 Frank Vander linden



Antwerp

Queen Elisabeth Hall
Koningin Astridplein 26; 0900.26.060,
www.fccc.be
NOV 4 20.00 Diana Krall

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24,
www.abconcerts.be
NOV 4 20.00 Roberto Fonseca

Espace Senghor
Waversesteenweg 366; 02.230.31.40,
www.senghor.be
NOV 7 20.30 Quentin Dujardin & Kalaban Koura

Le Bar du Matin
Alsembergsesteenweg 172; 02.537.71.59,
<http://bardumatin.blogspot.com>
NOV 5 21.00 Talking Loud
NOV 12 21.00 Briskey

Sounds Jazz Club
Tulpstraat 28; 02.512.92.50,
www.soundsjazzclub.be
NOV 4 22.00 Caribe Con K - Los Soneros del Barrio

Théâtre Marni
Vergniestraat 25; 02.639.09.80
NOV 10 20.30 Bansuricollectif
NOV 12 20.30 Slang

Ghent

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060,
www.vooruit.be
NOV 4 20.00 Myra Melford & Trio M
NOV 10 20.00 Bender Banjax

Mol

Muziekcafé Meulenberg
Milostraat 1; 014.32.11.54,
www.cafemeulenberg.be
NOV 7 21.30 Eamonn McCormack, blues-rock guitar



Brussels

Maison du Peuple
Sint-Gillisvoorplein 37-39; 02.217.26.00,
www.maison-du-peuple.be
NOV 7 21.30 T'Chalas Band, music from Cape Verde

Théâtre Marni
Vergniestraat 25; 02.639.09.80
NOV 6-7 20.30 Anakrouze, world music polyphony

Théâtre Molière
Bastionsquare 3; 02.217.26.00,
www.muziekpubliek.be
NOV 4 12.30 Elias Bachoura (Syria), free concert



Antwerp

Amuz
Kammenstraat 81; 03.248.28.28,
www.amuz.be
NOV 7 21.00 Champ d'Action performs work by Luc Brewey in celebration of the Flemish composer's 50th birthday

deSingel
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28,
www.desingel.be
NOV 12 20.00 Collegium Vocale Gent Orchestra and Choir, conducted by Philippe Herreweghe, with Hana Blazikova and Dorothee Mields, soprano; Robin Blaze and Damien Guillon, countertenor; Colin Balzer, tenor; Peter Kooij and Simon Kirkbride, bass: Purcell

Brussels

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be
Concerts at 20.00:

NOV 6-8 De Munt Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by Lawrence Renes, with Sally Matthews, soprano; Dietrich Henschel, baritone: Schönberg's A Survivor from Warsaw; Brahms' Ein Deutsches Requiem

NOV 10 Boris Berezovsky, piano: Schumann, Schubert, Liszt

NOV 11 Collegium Vocale Gent, conducted by Philippe Herreweghe, with Dorothee Mields and Hana Blazikova, sopranos; Damien Guillon and Robin Blaze, countertenors; Colin Balzer, tenor; Peter Kooij, bass; Simon Kirkbride, bass: Purcell

NOV 12 Brussels Philharmonic, conducted by Michel Tabachnik, with Vlaams Radio Koor, Octopus Kamerkoor, Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel soloists: Stockhausen, Beethoven

De Munt
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39, www.demunt.be
NOV 6 12.30 De Munt Chamber Music Ensemble: Brahms' Serenade No 1

Flagey
Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20,
www.flagey.be
NOV 5 20.15 Huelgas Ensemble, conducted by Paul Van Nevel: Massaino, von Bruck, Lassus

Maison des Musiques
Lebeaustraat 39; 02.550.13.20
NOV 10 19.30 Hauschka

Miniemerk
Miniemerstraat 62; 02.511.93.84,
www.minimes.net
NOV 4 20.00 Ricercar Consort, conducted by Philippe Pierlot: Pohle, Weckmann

Musical Instruments Museum
Hofberg 2; 02.545.01.30,
www.mim.fgov.be
NOV 8 11.00 Véronique Bogaerts, violin; Jean-Claude Vanden Eynden, piano

Royal Music Conservatory
Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37,
www.kcb.be
NOV 9 20.00 Prazak Quartet with Evgeny Koroliov, piano: Haydn, Schumann



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DON'T MISS

Siegfried De Buck

Until 7 February
Design Museum, Ghent

On the occasion of his 60th birthday, the Design Museum hosts a retrospective of this Flemish jewellery designer and silversmith, with objects from his collection of the last 38 years and an homage from his family, friends, colleagues and students. With contemporary touches hidden within seemingly classic looks, De Buck's influence on generations of designers in Belgium is immeasurable.



© Michèle Francken

<http://design.museum.gent.be>

Antwerp

Vlaamse Opera
Frankrijklei 1; 070.22.02.02,
www.vlaamseopera.be
Until NOV 21 15.00/20.00 Madame Butterfly, directed by Muhai Tang

Sint-Niklaas

CC Stadsschouwburg
Richard Van Britsomstraat 21;
03.766.30.85, www.ccsint-niklaas.be
Until NOV 15 15.00/20.00 Operette Die Csardasfürstin



Antwerp

Arenberg
Arenbergschouwburg 28; 070.222.192,
www.arenbergschouwburg.be
NOV 6 20.30 Zinnema in Mestizo Goes Theatre 2009, duo dance performance

Bruges

Concertgebouw
't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02,
www.concertgebouw.be
NOV 7 20.00 Batsheva Dance Company in MAX, choreographed by Ohad Naharin

Magdalena (MaZ)
Magdalenastraat 27; 050.44.30.60,
www.ccbrugge.be
NOV 6 20.00 Batsheva Dance Company in Mamootot, choreographed by Ohad Naharin

Brussels

Beursschouwburg
Auguste Ortsstraat 20-28; 02.550.03.50,
www.beursschouwburg.be
NOV 11 20.30 Lisbeth Gruwez and Voetvolk in Birth of Prey, dance/ performance

Theatre 140

Eugène Plaskylaan 140; 02.733.97.08,



Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24,
www.abconcerts.be
NOV 5 20.45 Joost Van Hyfte & Xander De Rycke, comedy (in Dutch)

KVS Bol

Lakensestraat 146; 02.210.11.00,
www.kvs.be

NOV 6-27 KVS and Het Toneelhuis present Titus Andronicus by Shakespeare (in Dutch with French and English surtitles)

KVS Box

Arduinkaai 9 (02.210.11.12)

NOV 10 20.30 Het Toneelhuis presents Maria-Magdalena (Wayn Wash III) by Wayn Traub (in multiple languages with Dutch surtitles)

Kaaitheteater

Saintelettesquare 20; 02.201.59.59, www.kaaitheteater.be

NOV 12-14 20.30 TTTTg (Triple Trooper Trevor Trumpet girl) by Tine Van Aerschot, with Carly Wijs and Tracy Wright (in English)

The Warehouse Studio

Waelhemstraat 69a; 0475.592.703, www.shksoc.com

NOV 9-14 20.00 The Shakespeare Society presents Julius Caesar, directed by Hugh Down (in English)

Ukkel Cultural Centre

Rodestraat 47; 02.374.64.84, www.ccu.be

NOV 6-7 20.15 Ladies Night, comedy show

Vorst-Nationaal

Victor Rousseaualaan 208; 0900.00.991

NOV 6 20.30 WWE: Smackdown Survivors Series Tour



Aalst

Netwerk: Centre for Contemporary Art

Houtkaai; 053.70.97.73, www.netwerk-art.be

Until NOV 7 Time as Activity: video art and installations by international artists

Stedelijk Museum 't Gasthuys

Oude Vismarkt 13; 053.73.23.40

Until DEC 23 Leerlooierij Schotte: Heden versus verleden (Tannery Schotte: Present versus Past), photos of an abandoned tannery before its reconversion by Flemish photographer Henk van Rensbergen.

Antwerp

Cathedral of Our Lady

Handschoenmarkt (03.213.99.51)

Until NOV 15 Reunion: from Quinten Metsys to Peter Paul Rubens, masterpieces from the Royal Museum of Fine Arts return to the Cathedral

Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)

Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60, www.muhka.be

Until NOV 8 A Larger Europe #1, art from republics of the former Soviet Union

Until JAN 3 Textiles: Art and the Social Fabric, installations, sculptures, film, flags and banners

Until FEB 26 Collectie XXIV: presentation of the museum's permanent collection

Havencentrum Lillo

Scheldelaan 444, Haven 621; www.havencentrum.be

Until DEC 14 Tabula Scaldis: Tafeereel van de Schelde, panoramic drawings and other documents take visitors on a tour of the River Scheldt from end to end

Middelheim Museum

Middelheimlaan 61; 03.828.13.50, www.middelheimmuseum.be

Until DEC 19 Camiel Van Breedam, recycled assemblages by the Flemish artist and jazz musician

Mode Museum

28 Nationalestraat; 03.470.27.70, www.momu.be

Until FEB 21 Delvaux: 180 Years of Belgian Luxury, history of the famous leather goods house

Rockox House

Keizerstraat 12; 03.201.92.50, www.rockoxhuis.be

Until NOV 15 A Gift to God, private patronage of religious art during Antwerp's Golden Age

Bruges

Bruggemuseum-Gruuthuse

Dijver 17; www.uitvindingvanbrugge.be

Until APR 25 De uitvinding van Brugge: De stad van Delacenserie (The Discovery of Bruges: The City of Delacenserie), the 19th-century architectural facelift of Bruges, thanks to local architect Louis Delacenserie

Brussels

Argos: Centre for Art and Media

Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.03, www.argosarts.org

Until DEC 19 Actors & Extras, contemporary artists explore the contrast between the work of actors and extras in cinema

Atomium

Heysel Park; 02.475.45.75, www.atomium.be

Until DEC 13 Africa: Fast forward, joint exhibition at the Atomium and Central Africa Museum, Tervuren, on the African continent today

Bozar (Paleis voor Schone Kunsten)

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be

Until JAN 3 Portraits of Artists: 80 Years of the Centre for Fine Arts in Pictures

Until JAN 3 The Other World: Puppet Theatre in China, the traditional art of puppetry, reflecting the life and traditions of everyday life in China

Until JAN 10 The State of Things, works by some 50 contemporary Belgian and Chinese artists, selected by Luc Tuymans and Ai Weiwei

Until JAN 24 Son of Heaven, 50 centuries of Chinese power and glory with 250 masterpieces from China's most prestigious museums

Until JAN 24 Still Life, works by 13 contemporary Chinese photographers

Until JAN 24 Architecture as Resistance, photographs, plans and models illustrating the work of Chinese architect Wang Shu

Costume and Lace Museum

Violettestraat 12; 02.213.44.50

Until DEC 29 From New Look to Expo 58, women's fashion from the time of Belgium's 1958 World's Fair, with evening gowns, wedding and cocktail dresses, suits, coats and accessories

ISELP

Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70

Until NOV 14 Flesh, drawings by Dany Danino, sculpture by Hughes Dubuisson and ceramics by Sofi Van Saltbommel

Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.226.12.57

Until NOV 22 Controverses: Een juridische en ethische geschiedenis van de fotografie (Controversy: A Judicial and Ethical History of Photography), portrait, advertising and fine art photography that has been banned or otherwise the subject of controversy

Museum of the National Band of Belgium

Wildewoudstraat 10; rini@rinihartman.nl

Until DEC 13 Rini Hartman: 8 Visions of Hope, exhibition by the Dutch artist on the eight themes of the UN Millennium Development Goals

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.347.30.33,

www.wiels.org

Until DEC 6 Ann Veronica Janssens: Serendipity, installations by the contemporary Belgian artist

Deurle

Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens

Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23,

www.museumdd.be

Until NOV 29 Absence is the Highest Form of Presence, work by Robert Gober, Julião Sarmento and Luc Tuymans

Geel

Gasthuismuseum

Gasthuisstraat 1; 014.59.14.43,

www.gasthuismuseumgeel.net

Until MAR 31 God of Doctoor?, collection illustrating the history of healing in Geel

Ghent

Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03, www.smak.be

Until NOV 15 Raphaël Buedts, furniture objects

Until NOV 22 Nick Ervinck, GNI-RI sep2009 EITOZOR, installations

Until NOV 22 Sculptural collections by various artists

Until DEC 6 Klaus Scherübel: Mallarmé, Het Boek, installations

Until DEC 6 Coming People 2009: Forwarding backyards, end works by students

Until JAN 10 Michel François, Faux Jumeaux (False Twins), photographs, videos and sculptures

Museum of Fine Arts

Fernand Scribedreef 1 – Citadelpark; 09.240.07.00, www.mskgent.be

Until FEB 7 Roar China! Lu Xun, Masereel and Avant-garde Graphic Art (1919-1949) (part of Europaia)

Until FEB 7 Max Beckmann, prints and paintings from the collection of the Von der Heydt Museum in Wuppertal

Until FEB 7 Fernand Léger's Le Grand Déjeuner, masterpiece painting on loan from the Museum of Modern Art in New York

Grimbergen

CC Strombeek

Gemeenteplein; 02.263.03.43,

www.ccstrombeek.be

Until DEC 10 Shot by both Sides, video installations by Pieter Geenen and Johan Grimonprez

Hasselt

Fashion Museum

Gasthuisstraat 11; 011.23.96.21,

www.modemuseumhasselt.be

Until NOV 8 In Her Shoes, trends and evolution of women's shoe design, from 1900 to contemporary designers

Kemzeke

Verbeke Foundation

Westakkers; 03.789.22.07,

www.verbekefoundation.com

Until NOV 15 Artificial Nature, outdoor sculpture and installations by contemporary Belgian and European artists

Leuven

Museum M

Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28;

016.20.09.09, www.mleuven.be

Until DEC 6 Rogier van der Weyden 1400 | 1464 Master of Passions, work by the 15th-century Brussels city painter, the first exhibition in Leuven's new museum

STUK

Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20,

www.stuk.be

NOV 7-JAN 24 Matt Mullican, drawings, sculptures, architectural constructions and performances

Machelen-Zulte

Het Roger Raveelmuseum

Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00,

www.rogerraveelmuseum.be

Until FEB 21 Espace: Raveel en Nederland (Raveel and the Netherlands), paintings

Mechelen

Speelgoedmuseum (Toy Museum)

Nekkerspoelstraat 21; 015.55.70.75,

www.speelgoedmuseum.be

Until JAN 3 Thirty-five years of Playmobil

Tervuren

Royal Museum for Central Africa

Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11,

www.africamuseum.be

Until JAN 3 Persona: Ritual Masks and Contemporary Art, masks from the museum's and other collections, shown alongside works by contemporary African artists

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FACE OF FLANDERS

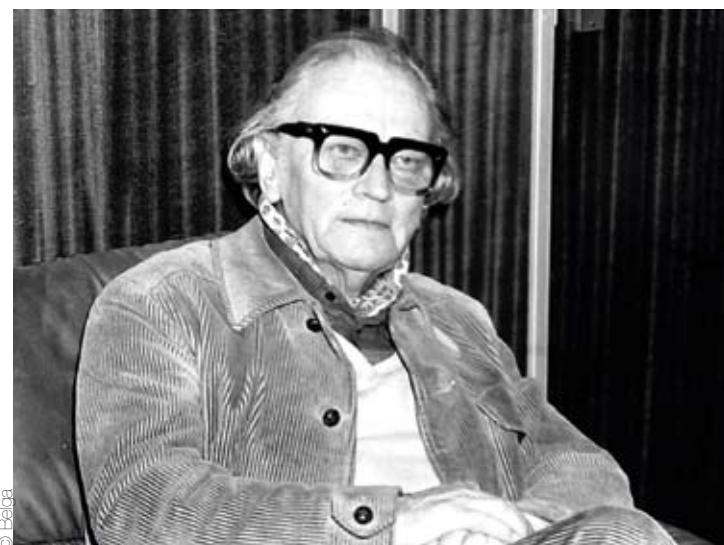
Renaat Braem

In practically every city and town in Flanders, you can find the stamp of Belgium's leading post-war architect

Before he died in 2001, Renaat Braem had designed or co-designed more than 50 houses and buildings, every one of them in Brussels or Flanders. Many people, in fact, continue to live in his housing projects, which put him in the international architectural spotlight in post-Second World War Europe.

Braem was the only Belgian to ever work as an assistant to the great Swiss architect Le Corbusier, a pioneer in modern architecture who imparted a life-long tendency towards constructivism in his Belgian student. This is easiest to see in Braem's many 1950s and 60s buildings dotted across the Antwerp landscape, including the famously unpopular 15-storey Politietoren (Police Tower), looking like a steel wafer shooting up into the sky. Altogether different are the white arches of his pavilion in the city's Middelheim Museum. Both buildings are now protected monuments.

Slightly south of Antwerp, though, is where the city is focusing a competition based on Braem's possibly most controversial work – a gigantic social housing project in the Kiel district. Architects are invited to submit proposals on how to update and re-use the director's house and boiler house at the site in order to "demonstrate the value of Braem's



architectural archives as a source of solutions to complex spatial problems."

The winner and results of the contest will be announced next year, the centenary of Braem's birth. To mark the occasion, there will also be a major exhibition at deSingel and a number of other activities, including an architectural route and the publication of a series of post-cards of Braem's work.

Braem, in fact, built huge apartment buildings all across Flanders, some more inspired than others, but his administrative buildings tend to integrate art and architecture with a touch more visual aesthetics. The

rectorate on the campus of the Free University of Brussels (VUB), for instance, has no sides or corners; it's a perfect ellipse, its entrance protected by a canopy that swoops up skyward like a great, big eyelash.

That landmark 1970s building should make it onto a postcard, as hopefully will part of its interior: Braem painted murals on every floor and used spiral staircases, whose wood steps contrast magically with brightly coloured railings.

The Renaat Braem House in Deurne is open to the public by appointment

→ www.vioe.be

LISA BRADSHAW

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



vlees en bloed →

For the past few months, going to the butcher's to buy *blinde vinken* – beef olives ("blind finches") or *worsten* – sausages has taken on an extra interest. What exactly goes on in the butcher's back room and upstairs? Is there a slightly backward relative feeding the sausage machine? Does the butcher spend his free day poaching deer for his game pâté? Is he as happily married as he looks or is he having an affair with that woman he's serving now?

You might ask if I'm always like this, to which I'd reply that such is the effect of a TV series earlier this year called *Van vlees en bloed* – *Of Flesh and Blood* about een *beenhouwer* – a butcher ("bone hacker"), or more correctly *een slager* ("a beater"), and his shop. You know this is something special as the credits roll over blood-dripping meat filmed in high definition. A superb story line and strong acting raises this everyday tale to the heights.

Now the dvd is in the shops in a box that looks as if it should contain *een varvenskotelet* – a pork chop. In fact, in October, the DVD box with its butcher's paper print was *enkel en alleen verkrijbaar in de beenhouwerijen* – exclusively available in butcher's shops. Though you would have had to be quick: on the first day *waren de dvd-dozen voor de middag al uitverkocht* – the DVD boxes

were sold out by midday. As one butcher remarked: "Zelden zoveel volk gezien in mijn winkel als vandaag" – Seldom seen so many people in my shop as today." A great piece of promotion for everyone. Such is the interest, that last weekend all over Flanders you could watch the whole series in film marathons.

Writer and director Tom Van Dyck, himself an electrician's son, decided on a butcher to avoid any misunderstandings with his own family and because he wanted to reflect the lives of *de kleine zelfstandige* – the small, self-employed. It also helped that the actor playing the butcher is the son of *een beenhouwer*. And the clean cold tiles of the shop *heeft prachtige beelden opgeleverd* – produced wonderful pictures.

Tom is planning a sequel. For the moment he's still *aan het broeden* – thinking about it ("brooding"). As to the characters, I'll just mention Herman, *de overbuur* – the neighbour from across the street, who is the local nosy parker. He is *werkloos en alleenstaande* – unemployed and lives alone. Every day he crosses the street when the shop opens to buy 100 grams of salami and stick his nose into everyone's business. So, go into your local butcher's and ask for *honderd gram salami*. You should get a smile and even be addressed as Herman.

bite

SHARON LIGHT

IKEA

You've been there for furniture; we've *all* been there for furniture. But have you been there for the food? It may not have been your goal when dragging yourself out to your city's outskirts, but IKEA does in fact provide a little taste of Sweden.

For research purposes, I took along a real Swede – my friend, Anna. Our adventure covered the breadth of IKEA's culinary offerings, which is to say both their restaurant and the food shop.

The restaurant prides function over form. The food is not particularly special, nor is it overwhelming Swedish. A few dishes are typical – Swedish meatballs, some gravad lax (cured salmon) and many of the desserts (which are excellent and are available in the food shop). But although Swedes eat their fair share of salmon, the fact that IKEA serves salmon does not mean you are in for a typical Swedish experience. Rather, the restaurant is more concerned with satisfying your basic needs so you can satisfy IKEA's basic need: you buying their furniture.

The Swedish food shop is another story altogether. Swedes living in Belgium are short on opportunities to stock up on traditional foods, and IKEA



certainly offers a broad selection. To help the non-Swedish, you can pick up IKEA's cookbook, *Proef Zweden!*

Anna first steered me to their soft thinbread: flat-as-can-be sheets flavoured with fennel, excellent for making wraps, perhaps with some of their gravad lax if you are so inclined (as I was). To do it right, pick up some of their mustard/dill sauce.

Anna also took the opportunity to stock up on Swedish fish. She buys one bag of the sweet, multi-colour variety and one bag of the salty, black variety. I have always detested the latter but Anna clued me in: take one sweet and one salty and eat them together. I could feel my horizons expanding.

IKEA's selection includes some excellent crisp breads and crackers, plus many other items including meats, fish roe, jams and alcohol. You'll find unusual flavours, such as the ever-present lingonberry; you'll also find flavours you know in unexpected places, such as blueberry or rosehip soup (another of Anna's favourites).

It's easy to breeze by the Swedish food shop; by the time you reach it, you're past the cashiers with a cart full of furniture. Don't be afraid to make a stop, though – you'll be pleasantly surprised.

→ www.ikea.be

The last word → → →

The ugly truth

"Inland from the coastline there are many beautiful villages, but the coast itself is disgusting."

Parliament speaker Jan Peumans incurs the wrath of the coastal mayors in a radio comment

Or is it?

"Peumans himself is disgusting. I'm glad he doesn't want to come to the coast."

Count Leopold Lippens, mayor of Knokke

Not dead yet

"Sixteen years after the death of her husband Boudewijn, Queen Fabiola has died at the age of 81."

Reports of the death of Fabiola were greatly exaggerated on the website of *De Morgen* last weekend

Burn me

"I don't want to be buried. I wouldn't wish it on anyone to have to dig me up in 15 years. Just cremate me; then I'm completely gone."

Raoul Delens, gravedigger in Jette, interviewed in *Het Nieuwsblad*