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Picture palace

The film museum in Brussels has been closed for two-and-a-half years. It was worth the wait

Ian Mundell

A film museum in Brussels that is bright, airy, up-to-date and comfortable? This is going to take some getting used to. But when Cinematek opens its doors for the first time this weekend, there won't be many people saying that they preferred the old building.

As well as the museum, the new name covers all of the activities of the Royal Belgian Film Archive. This ranges from its library and collection of 61,000 films, to its publications and DVDs and its educational and outreach activities throughout Belgium.

"With this museum project we were thinking about how we could show our collection in a better and broader way – not only more screenings but all the parts of the collection," explains Gabrielle Claes, who oversees the entire organisation.

The importance of having an intriguing shop-front for the collection is essential, according to chief programmer Tonie De

Waele. "One of the main missions of the Film Archive is to keep the history of cinema alive, and the best way to do that is to show films," he says. "We discover more and more that what we consider to be classics are in fact discoveries, certainly for a younger generation. In recent years, it is not uncommon to see people in their 20s and 30s who don't know who Charlie Chaplin is."

Tucked under Horta

The address of the Cinematek is one of the few things it shares with the old Film Museum: just look for the striking blue neon sign on Baron Hortastraat next to Bozar, the centre for fine arts. (The name "Cinematek", incidentally, has already attracted complaints from both Dutch and French speakers, and so is considered a success by the management.)

But behind the door, everything has changed. The old Film

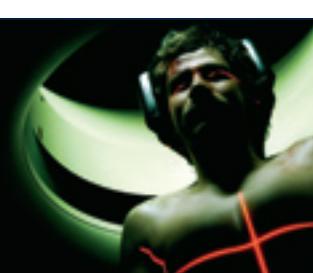
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Obama beer

Flemish brewing subsidiary in the US makes a special presidential "Belgian-style" brown ale that "emerges from the bottle with cool, elegant appeal and surprising strength".

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Confessions of a dirty mind

Linkeroever director Pieter Van Hees' second film delivers with a kinetic energy and sharp commentary on visual stereotyping.

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People who live in glass houses

The Glass House in Limburg is a gorgeous construction of glass and steel, with a cone reaching upwards and a spiralling staircase. Just don't throw any stones.

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Dendermonde killer on suicide watch

Young man killed three, injured 12 in crèche

Alan Hope

The 20-year-old man accused of killing two babies and a child minder at the Fabeltjesland ("Fairy Tale Land") crèche in Sint-Gillis near Dendermonde was refusing food in Bruges prison this week and maintaining his silence in the face of investigators' questions. He has been placed on suicide watch at the prison, and was due to appear before a judge as *Flanders Today* went to press to determine whether he is sane enough to stand trial on three charges of murder and 12 of attempted murder.

Kim De Gelder entered the crèche

unhindered on the morning of Friday, 24 January, carrying two knives, an axe and a replica of a pistol in a backpack. When questioned by 54-year-old child minder Marita Blindeman, he stabbed her, then began attacking babies sleeping in their cots. One baby boy, aged nine months, was killed instantly. Another aged six months died later. A further 10 children and two child minders were injured.

De Gelder, who witnesses described as extremely thin, with dyed red hair and wearing white makeup, escaped on

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Roger van der Weyden

Many of the great Flemish paintings were acquired by Philip II of Spain during his rule of the Low Countries and ended up in the Prado in Madrid. That means you have to make a long journey to Spain if you want to look at some of the key works by Flemish masters like Roger van der Weyden and Rubens.

At least that was the case in the old days. The Prado has now signed an agreement with Google that allows 14 of its masterpieces to be viewed online using Google Maps. This employs technology that up until now has allowed people to snoop inside their neighbour's back garden or gain a satellite view of the devastation that tree-felling has brought to the Amazon rainforest. Google now lets you look at some of the world's great paintings without boarding a plane.

The images have been compiled using 8,000 high resolution photos taken over the course of six months. The resolution is set at 14,000 megapixels, which is 1,400 times clearer than a 10-megapixel digital camera.

With a simple click of the zoom, you can examine Van der Weyden's "Deposition from the Cross", painted in 1435, and see the delicate tears in a mourner's eye or the tiny brushstrokes that define the eyelashes. "Normally you have to stand a good distance away from these works, but this offers you the chance to see details

that you could only see from a big ladder placed right beside them," says a Google spokesperson.

Using the highest level of magnification, you can distinguish tiny crossbows hanging in the Gothic arches at the top corners of the paintings, which were added on the instruction of Leuven's Brotherhood of Crossbowmen when they commissioned Van der Weyden to paint the work for their chapel.

The Google tool also enables you to take a close look at Rubens' "Three Graces", painted in Antwerp in 1636. "With this high level resolution," says Prado director Miguel Zugaza, "you are able to see fine details such as the tiny bee on the petal of a flower."

But no one is arguing that this is a perfect substitute for the real thing. "With the digital image, we're seeing the body of the paintings in almost scientific detail," Zugaza says. "What we don't see is the soul. The soul will always only be seen by contemplating the original."

We will have the chance to contemplate the soul of Van der Weyden in September when the revamped Leuven city museum holds a major exhibition of his works. Until then, we can check out the fine details on Google.

Derek Blyth

online

www.earth.google.com



Close up and personal:
Roger van der
Weyden's "Deposition from the Cross"

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independent newsweekly

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FACE OF FLANDERS**Michaël Verheyden**

Michaël Verheyden was naturally very happy to receive the 2008 Henry van de Velde Award for Young Talent earlier this month from Design Flanders. Not only does he get the €5,000 prize money, he also welcomes the attention. As a young brand, it is important to him to reach a large audience.

It's true that not many Belgians outside of Limburg province had heard of Verheyden before he was first nominated for the Henry van de Velde Award in 2007. Not that he didn't do anything interesting enough to attract attention: during his industrial design studies in Genk, he formed the punk rock band Promenade Seven, worked for Flemish designers such as Fabiaan Van Severen (furniture) and Piet Stockmans (porcelain) and took up modelling.

That third gig is how the then 19-year-old met Raf Simons, the man who asked him to produce a bag for his collection – thus igniting in the young Verheyden a fascination with handbags and fashion that eventually resulted in his own line of leather handbags and accessories for both men and women.

Still you can't label Verheyden, now 30, as a fashion designer – because he is so much more than that. It seems there are barely enough outlets for his creativity – everything he touches turns to art: a transparent desk for the Z33 arts centre in Hasselt, unique structuring of exhibition spaces, first prize for the best designed catering costume. He even does his own art installations, which reflect on the way he lives and works.

It is his background as an industrial designer combined with an interest in art and culture that makes his own collection so interesting. Instead of focusing on superficial trends, his work is conceptually very strong. Verheyden values authentic quality and craftsmanship, and thus spends a lot of time and energy looking for the right materials and the right people to put them together.

His handbag and wallet designs are sleek, luxurious in a discreet way. He calls it "understated chic", and there are a few musicians who couldn't be more fond of this approach, like Roisin Murphy and Chicks on Speed. James Murphy of LCD Soundsystem ordered a custom-made bag, which Verheyden now offers as part of his collection.

On his website, Verheyden quotes another designer known for his clean and elegant sense of fashion: Paul Smith. "I think the recession and crisis could create a special period," says Smith. "Maybe there'll be more understanding for people who scream less, for individual work."

We think Mr Smith is absolutely right, and now is the time for designers like Michaël Verheyden to claim their place in the limelight.

Stéphanie Duval

online

www.michaelverheyden.be

Letter to the editor

I am a retired police officer and have been following English classes for two years. Last year, we read from a course book; this year, we all have a subscription to *Flanders Today* and use it weekly for conversation. Although my knowledge of English is rather limited, I am encouraged to write you a letter.

Honestly, your newsweekly is splendid. The different columns and topics are carefully edited and very much appeal to me. I especially like the "Talking Dutch" column, which is instructive. And the interviews on the back page are very interesting. Most of all, your weekly is comprehensible to me as a Fleming. I have already learned much vocabulary and English expressions.

I wrote this letter dictionary in hand. Despite the effort, I enjoyed myself and rewarded myself with a Duvel, remembering your recent interview with Pieter Aspe.

W Lauwers, Ekeren

TALKING DUTCH**notes on language****griep**

"Coughs and sneezes spread diseases" is an age-old warning. These days the H3N2 flu virus is among us and has invaded the MacLean household. I've been spared so far, but the lady of the house, who has no time for being ill, is laid low. She can hardly believe it.

According to an online doctor, she can expect *twee ellendige weken* – two miserable weeks. With the doc's help, I can see when it all started. It begins modestly: *drie virusdeeltjes zijn al voldoende* – three virus "parts" are enough. So for viruses, it takes three to tango. The next day you are infectious, even though you still feel fine: *tot een week blijf je besmettelijk* – you remain infectious for one week.

Day 3 must have been last Thursday: plots voel je heel ziek – suddenly you feel very ill. You have *koude rillingen* – cold shivers; *hoofdpijn en spierpijn* – headache and muscle aches; *koorts* – fever; *een loopneus en je moet hoesten* – a runny nose, and you have to cough.

Days 4-8 you take to your bed. Mrs MacLean had other ideas: off to work and then a long evening of poetry, music and haggis as a group of us Scots celebrated the immortal memory of our national poet, Robert Burns, born on 25 January 1759. However, the three viruses and their offspring were soon to have their way, and day 5 saw her properly confined to bed.

The bad news for the rest of us is that Al die tijd kun je anderen besmetten – All that time you can infect others. And, apart from aspirin, there is nothing much that helps: *sneller beter worden gaat niet* – there is no way you can get better faster ("faster better becoming goes not").

So, by my reckoning, today must be day 6. Do I have a threesome busily multiplying inside me as I write this on Sunday morning? According to one virologist, *de epidemie moet nog echt losbarsten* – the epidemic has still to explode. So my prospects aren't looking good. I've taken every reasonable measure. I've kept a cautious distance. On Friday evening I tried to warn the other Burnsians not to give my wife a threefold kiss (one virus per peck). And I devoutly ensured I had an innocent body between us when we finally linked hands to sing "Auld Lang Syne".

For my goodwife, as Burns would have called her, by midweek she should be on the mend: *Je bent koortsvrij en kan weer uit bed komen* – You are fever-free and can get out of bed. And most importantly for this selfish writer, *anderen besmetten zul je niet meer* – you will no longer infect others.

Tomorrow morning I will run the gauntlet of the infected and their three spare viruses as I ride to work. But for now it's time to wash my hands again.

Alistair MacLean

online

www.gezondheid.be
www.rabbie-burns.com

"The whole country is in shock and mourning"



Belp

About 7,000 people took part in a silent march in Sint-Gillis Dendermonde at the weekend, laying flowers, candles and toys at the entrance of the Fabeltjesland day-care centre, where the killings took place on 24 January. Interior minister Guido De Paepe took part, as did the mother of murdered teenager Annick Van Uytvelde. The parents of two-year-old Luna Drowart, killed in 2006 by Antwerp gunman Hans Van Themsche, sent a message to the parents of children affected by Friday's drama

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his bicycle but was caught by police five kilometres away in Lebbeke. According to some reports, his plan was to attack another crèche nearby, but prosecutors would neither confirm nor deny this.

The alarm was raised, apparently by Blindeman in her last moments, and police arrived. Theo Janssens, chairman of the social aid committee that runs the facility, arrived on the scene at the same time as the first emergency service personnel. "Blood everywhere, a total disaster," he said later. "I literally had to step over injured babies. Everyone and everything was covered in blood."

Panic soon spread through the town in East Flanders. Anxious parents, hearing the news from early reports or friends, rushed to the scene. The panic was made worse because there are two crèches in Sint-Gillis within close proximity, and early reports were not clear which one had been attacked.

Arrested immediately

De Gelder was arrested not far away after a police helicopter flew over the area. He did not resist and was found wearing a bulletproof vest. Jef Vermassen, a criminal lawyer who is also an expert on the behaviour of murderers, said that this detail was exceptional in the case of mass murderers, who more often than not see their own death – either by their own hand

or at the hands of the police – as the climax of their killing spree. The murder weapon was found by police thrown into bushes near the crime scene.

After being taken briefly to hospital in Aalst, De Gelder was moved to Dendermonde for questioning. According to the prosecutor's office, he was refusing to cooperate, only laughing at officers' questions. It emerged later that he had been moved to the medical wing of Bruges prison, having refused food and drink and was being fed through an IV drip.

De Gelder is unemployed and lived alone in Sinaai near Sint-Niklaas. He has no police record and is not known to be under psychiatric care, in contrast to first reports. He was described by neighbours as a loner, interested only in computers and films, who hardly spoke and "lived in his own little world".

At the wholesale gifts and decoration company in Belsele where he worked for a year, he was described as conscientious but slow, finding it difficult to get on socially with co-workers. Nobody had ever had any reason to think of him as aggressive. He left the company at the end of last year, having explained to colleagues that his parents were about to leave on a trip around the world, and he wanted to go with them.

The stabbing victims were initially taken to hospitals in Ghent, Lokeren and Sint-Niklaas but later gathered together in Ghent University Hospital. Emergency services at the scene had to improvise a system of identification for the babies and toddlers, few of whom were able to identify

themselves. Each child had a number written with marker pen on the forehead and a digital photo taken at the hospital. These were then shown to parents gathered at a nearby crisis centre to allow identifications to be made.

Uninjured children were allowed to go home. One of them was the daughter of Bart Van Belle, a journalist with *De Standaard*, who detailed his experiences in the newspaper. "The news comes like a slap in the face. My body floods with adrenaline. I'm not panicking, but the uncertainty is a killer," he wrote on Saturday. "I realise our daughter came out of it all right. Kids who lay sleeping beside her are gone or are fighting for their lives in the hospital. And I realise all over again that we've been extremely lucky indeed."

According to Dendermonde mayor Piet Buyse, the Fabeltjesland crèche will not reopen. "The staff could not put babies in their cots in that place," he said. "Imagine what it would be like for parents to go back."

Reactions worldwide

The international media were quick to pick up the story, with reports on BBC and CNN and in newspapers from Sydney to Los Angeles. Predictably, most made reference to Belgium's notoriety as the home of Marc Dutroux, the man convicted of abducting and murdering four girls in 1996.

"Not Belgium again," read the head-

line in Britain's *The Times*. But editorialist Roger Boyes went on: "Not Belgium again, was the first, sad response to the tragedy in Dendermonde," he wrote. "But the truth is that child abuse, infanticide and massacres have become part of the fabric of modern Europe and not just benighted Belgium with its paedophile rings. Children are now prime victims; while we have seemingly become more sophisticated over the past decade, kids have never been so vulnerable."

The Independent pointed out Belgium's history of child murders, including Natalie Mahy and Stacy Lemmens in Liège in 2006, the children of recently-convicted Geneviève Lhermitte in Nijvel and of course the victims of Dutroux.

Meanwhile, politicians at home also reacted. Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters spoke of his feelings of "disgust and deep sorrow". Prime Minister Herman Van Rompuy said the entire country was "in shock and in mourning for this terrible act of violence." Family affairs minister Veerle Heeren, one of the first on the scene, said she was "shocked as a minister and as a mother".

• As *Flanders Today* went to press, Dendermonde prosecutor Christian Du Four announced De Gelder is now being investigated in connection with the murder earlier this month of a 73-year-old woman in Beveren. There are "strong indications" De Gelder may have been involved in the stabbing, Du Four said. He declined to give details.

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Museum, with its exhibition of artefacts from the early years of cinema and two screening rooms, was installed in a columned hall originally designed to display decorative arts. It wasn't exactly an ideal match, and for all the pleasant hours I've spent leaning on the columns while queuing up to see movies, there are less happy memories of being trapped behind the one that remained in the larger screening room.

All this had to change with the major renovations of Bozar to bring the building back to the lines originally conceived by Victor Horta. The hall of decorative arts had to be restored to its open-plan design, and, while this would be fine for the museum's exhibition space, what could be done with the screening rooms?

The radical solution, proposed by Ghent-based architects Robbrecht & Daem, was to dig beneath Bozar and construct two new cinemas below the ground. The idea has succeeded brilliantly (although not without some civil engineering difficulties which delayed work by nearly a year).

Now when you descend the stairs from street level to the Cinematek, you enter an open hall with light flooding in from above and previously blocked off views into the rest of Bozar. A wide staircase leads down to two new cinemas, and even these lower corridors benefit from daylight thanks to a strategically-placed light well.

Better exhibitions

There is much more to look at among the exhibitions on the first level. The artefacts that made up the old display have been remounted into a "wunderkammer", a cabinet of curiosities that aptly evokes the fair-ground atmosphere of early cinema and how far we have come in capturing the moving image. These range from magic lanterns and zoetropes to the sort of cameras used by pioneers like Eadweard Muybridge, Thomas Edison and the Lumière Brothers.

New to Cinematek (and not as old as they sound) are the Moviolas, four booths with computer screens in which you can sample short films, documentaries and news reels from the archives. "It's a different kind of programming," Claes explains. "It's part of the film collection that is never shown in the screening rooms because it is not part of 'film history'. But we wanted to give the public access to that part of the collection, as well."

The Film Archive has already released some of this material on DVD, such as *Docks and Dockers*, a documentary on Belgian ports, and *Expotopia*, about the 1958 Brussels Expo. But there is much more, from films on Belgian carnivals and early animations, to news reels about the royal family and from the Congo. Around 100 hours of film has been digitised and is held on a central server, which also delivers selections of films to a curtained-off screening room at the back of the exhibition area. The selections will change and grow over time, depending on feedback.

Finally there is Remix, a matrix of eight video screens hanging from the ceiling on which fragments from the collection are shown. "It's like a detail in a painting," says Claes. "I believe strongly in the power of those excerpts. But the idea is also to tempt the public back to see the whole film when we show it."

It is also expected that from time to time artists and video makers will be offered

these screens to make installations drawing on the film archive collections.

New cinemas

When I ask Tonie de Waele, head of programming, what the new cinema design will allow him to do that he couldn't do before, his response is immediate: "Watch movies comfortably". Seating in the old Film Museum was legendary for being hard on the cineaste, and the chunky black seats now installed feel much better.

As in the old Film Museum, there is one large and one small cinema, but now there is not that rigid division between the sound films in the large one and silents in the small. Both are equipped with sound, and both have pianos, allowing programmers to mix and match according to the anticipated audience.

The larger cinema has 117 seats, arranged

The name has already attracted complaints from both Dutch and French speakers, and so is considered a success by the management

in a steep rake that should ensure a clear view for everyone. The old cinema was practically flat, and it was easy to get stuck behind tall students or senior citizens too well brought up to slouch. It also has a new digital projector, which promises top quality results as digital prints of films become increasingly available.

The smaller cinema has just 29 seats, also raked, but still strangely reminiscent of the old museum's tiny screening room for silent films. The front row, almost in the pianist's pocket, still feels a bit too close to the screen for comfort.

As before, there is a daily programme,

with afternoon screenings on some days. New is a regular series of free lunch-time short films. In all, there will be about 40 screenings every week, slightly up on the old museum. The ticket price has also crept up, from €2 to €3.

What's on?

Along with a monthly programme devoted to major personalities or periods in film history, there will be a number of new themes in the Cinematek programme. The anthology of films that was a staple of the old Film Museum has been refreshed



How far we've come: a brand new Film Museum awaits your visit, with more light, improved exhibitions and – finally – comfortable seating

and will be explored in new ways, through links and associations. "Sometimes the links are obvious, sometimes they will need an explanation," says De Waele. "They might be really important links in cinematography, other times it will be just a game – like a quote from one film that appears in another as an homage."

For example, in March Cinematek will screen Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, which will be linked with *Blade Runner* and *Playtime*, perhaps also with one of Lang's American films.

There will also be a more structured approach to Belgian films, with local film critics Philippe Reynaert and Jan Temmerman invited to select and present a group of linked Belgian films every two months. In February this will be on the film industry itself, including *Janssen en Janssens Draaien een Film* (*Janssen and Janssens Make a Film*), a caustic commentary on Belgian cinema by Robbe de Hert and Luc Pien, Ca

rend heureux (*What Makes You Happy*) by Joachim Lafosse, a more affectionate picture of low-budget filmmaking in Brussels, and Erik Van Looy's *Shades*.

Another initiative is the Duo programme, with each month a Belgian director invited to present one of his or her own films and follow it with a favourite film from the archive. First up is the pioneering Flemish animator Raoul Servais, who will show his own short films, followed by a programme of short films from the silent era, including Charlie Chaplin's *Pay Day* and *Felix the Cat*. In March it will be the Golden Palm-winning Dardenne Brothers and in April Jan Verheyen (*Los*).

Cinematek also wants to focus more on a monthly rendezvous for certain kinds of film. Appointments with experimental cinema, documentary and exploitation horror movies have already proved successful in the Ex-Shell building, which has been the temporary home of screenings while

the renovations were under way. These will continue, along with spots for animation and rare or restored films from the archives.

Finally, the public will be given a chance to choose its own movies, with monthly polls hosted by the Cinebel website and in the newspaper *La Libre Belgique*. The first theme is crazy love, with a choice of 10 films ranging from *In the Mood for Love* to *True Romance* and *Jules et Jim*.

The opening weekend, 31 January and 1 February, will be a chance to explore the new film museum and dip into a rolling programme of films in both cinemas. After that, February promises retrospectives of the directors Vittorio De Sica, Erich Von Stroheim and animator Ralph Bakshi, a survey of Hollywood in the 1970s and a look at controversial silent film star Fatty Arbuckle.

online

www.cinematek.be



Cinematek near you

The film museum's programme covers most of Flanders

You don't have to go to Brussels to experience Cinematek's programme. For many years, now it has run Delicatessen, a series of classic films that tours venues in Bruges, Kortrijk, Ghent, Mechelen and Turnhout. The selection comes from a catalogue of around 250 films for which the Film Archive has local distribution rights.

"This programme has followed the declining curve of cinema going, so we have lost spectators in Flanders compared to five years ago. But that's to be expected if you look at cinema-going overall," says Tonie de Waele, head of programming for Cinematek. Once the new Cinematek is up and running smoothly, he hopes to be able to refresh this selection.

Other activities in Flanders are more academic and have a more enthusiastic public. At the Film Plateau in Ghent, the catalogue provides a programme themed for students at the city's university, which the general public can also attend. Also in Ghent, there is a screening each month in the Museum voor Industriële Archeologie en Textiel, with the idea that spectators come into the projection booth of the small cinema to see how it all works as well as watching the film.

In Antwerp, the Cinematek works closely with the Film Museum Antwerp that is now part of Muhka Media. "They do on a small scale what we are doing in Brussels, so a lot of prints come from our archive," says De Waele.

A highlight of 2009 will be the biennial Summer Film School in Bruges, eight intensive days of film study in English. Likely themes will be 1960, a magical year for cinema, and the films of Raoul Walsh. Meanwhile the lecture series *Antomie van de Film* that take place in Brussels is expected to go on tour to Ghent, Antwerp and Hasselt.

The one missing piece here is the promotion of classic Flemish film in Flanders. "In most cases the producers are Flemish, so if people really want to show them, they can get a print from the archive," De Waele says. "But it's not something that theatres are asking for. The new product, yes, but not the classics."

For that there is the Film Archives excellent DVD series *Chronicle of Flemish Cinema*, which includes 11 classic films and documentaries about each one, and explorations of significant films, such as 1943's *De Vlaschaard* (*The Flax Field*) and the new release *Met onze jongens aan den IJzer* (*With Our Boys on the Yser*).

Clockwise from top left: The original poster from *Ombres et Lumières* – all that is left of the 1929 Belgian film; Brian De Palma's *Carrie* is one of the 42 films showing next month during USA 70s; Henri Storck's *Sur les bords de la camera* is part of the Film Archive's new DVD release *Avant-Garde: Surrealism and Experimentation in Belgian Cinema*

Antwerp professor elected to International Court

Belgian jurist Christine Van den Wyngaert was last week elected to the post of judge at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. Van den Wyngaert was one of 21 candidates for six vacant positions on the bench and was elected by representatives of the 108 countries that have ratified the treaty founding the court. "It was a very emotional moment," she said. "While I was watching Obama explain his dream on TV, my own dream came true."

Van den Wyngaert already sits on the bench of the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY), where she was appointed last year as lead judge in the trial of Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić. "This is the finalisation of a trajectory that has taken me years of work," she said.

She first became interested in international criminal law in the 1980s, when the notion of a supranational criminal jurisdiction was only "a far-off ideal". Since then she has sat on a committee set up to update the Geneva Conventions, as well as serving on the International Court of Justice, the body which rules on disputes between states, all the while teaching at the University of Antwerp. Since 2003, she has sat on the bench of the ICTY, also based in the Hague.

The ICC was set up in 2002 to deal with war crimes, crimes



"I hope Obama can turn the tide": Christine Van den Wyngaert

against humanity and genocide, but can only prosecute crimes committed after that date. There are 108 signatory nations, notable exceptions being Israel and the United States. The court is currently investigating four "situations" worldwide: Congo, the Central African Republic, Darfur

region in Sudan and northern Uganda.

"This is a high court that still has to make its mark," Van den Wyngaert said. "The important thing is that the sitting judges have practical experience and that the procedures become streamlined. And as many countries as possi-

ble have to sign up." The arrival of Barack Obama in the White House offers new hope: "It's crucial that the US work with the court, but Bush pulled out. I hope Obama can turn the tide and sign and ratify the treaty," she said.

FIFTH COLUMN



Listmania

In Belgium, people can either vote for an individual candidate or for a party list. Party lists put the candidates in a certain order. The higher on the list, the higher the chances for a candidate to be elected. That means that the drawing up of the lists is a matter that all parties take very seriously.

Journalists love this process of "list forming" because it shows who enjoys the full support of their parties, who are the coming men and women, and who is on the way out.

All of this can be quite painful (another reason why journalists are so keen on this subject). Inevitably it brings about disappointment for some. This week, this was the case for Marie-Rose Morel from the Flemish nationalist Vlaams Belang and Mia De Vits of the socialist SPA. Months ago, Morel, a member of the Flemish Parliament, made it public that she wanted to become an MEP. After rumours of a love affair between her and former party president Frank Vanhecke (rumors Morel has always denied), things turned sour. The party wanted to avoid the image of Morel and Vanhecke together in their love nest.

Irritated, Morel dropped her claim on the European list. And now she is refusing a place on the list for the Flemish Parliament. "I would rather flip burgers in McDonald's than remain in a parliament no one is interested in," she announced. Politics had always been a job on the side for her, she added; she does not need a political mandate to make a living.

Although the political opposite of Morel, socialist Mia De Vits saw something similar happen to her. In 2004, De Vits headed the European list of her party SPA. She was a newcomer to politics at the time, but, as the leading woman of the socialist union ABVV, she was quite well known.

Five years later, the SPA picked not De Vits, but Kathleen Van Brempt, minister in the Flemish Government, to head the European list. De Vits was offered a place on the list for the Flemish Parliament, but she refused. "I am simply not interested in the Flemish Parliament," she said. A bitter De Vits saw the decision as ageist (she is in her late 50s) and felt punished for speaking out against the proposed name change of her party SPA. This weekend, SPA party president Caroline Gennez announced that De Vits would reconsider a place on the Flemish list. "If she accepts, it will be because she is a good socialist," Gennez said. This gives De Vits only two options: setting aside personal pride and accepting a transfer to the Flemish Parliament, or being classified as "not a good socialist". It's going to be a tough choice for a proud socialist like De Vits.

Anja Otte

In Bruges in the running for script Oscar



Martin McDonagh (centre) directs *In Bruges* stars Brendan Gleeson (left) and Colin Farrell

The black comedy *In Bruges* was last week nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay. The film, which takes place in Bruges, was written by director Martin McDonagh after a visit to the city. The film's locations have led to a boost in the number of tourists visiting the city.

The award is generally considered one of the most important Oscars, after the main acting and directing awards. McDonagh is up against Courtney Hunt for *Frozen River*, Mike Leigh for *Happy-Go-Lucky*, Dustin Lance Black for *Milk* and Andrew Stanton and Jim Reardon for *WALL-E*. The awards will be announced on 22 February. McDonagh won an Oscar for his short film *Six Shooter* in 2004.

online

www.oscar.com

Briefly: Yahoo in court, Flemish fear Islam

• Two Flemish men went on trial this week in England, charged in connection with the biggest virtual robbery in British history. The two, from Vrasene near Beveren, installed spyware on the computers of a Japanese bank in London and tried to transfer €240 million to their own accounts.

• A court in Dendermonde this week began hearing a case against Internet giant Yahoo after the company failed to cooperate with a police investigation into online fraud. Yahoo faces a possible fine of €55,000.

• Almost half of all people in Flanders think Islam is a threat to their culture, according to research carried out at Leuven University. Only 18% said Islam had something to offer Flanders. Muslim men control their wives too much, according to 81% of people polled, while 47% consider Islam to be more violent than other cultures.

• The VRT TV epic *De Smaak van De Keyser* won three prestigious FIPA D'Or prizes last weekend in Biarritz in southern France, for best series, best actor (Marieke Dillis) and best music (Wim De Wilde).

• A Catholic priest from Kalmthout near Antwerp has been sentenced to seven years in prison for sexual abuse of four minors over a period of 18 years. The witnesses came forward after the priest was arrested for possession of child pornography in connection with an Austrian online investigation.

• Sales of the anti-ADHD drug Ritalin (Methylphenidate, marketed here as Rilatine) rose spectacularly in the last five years, according to figures from the Medical Institute for Statistics, with 14.8 million pills sold in 2008, compared to 9.6 million five years earlier. Part of the increase is due to increased use of the drug in student circles, where it is believed to improve intellectual performance and concentration.

VRT puts pressure on independent producers

The Flemish public broadcaster needs to cut €100 million over the next three years

A stalemate in contract negotiations between the Flemish public broadcaster VRT and one of its principal suppliers of programmes is a symptom of the crisis in the sector, which is expected to lead to a 13% job loss in independent production houses by this summer.

The VRT has asked Woestijnvis, which produces current hits such as *Van vlees en bloed* and *De slimste mens ter wereld*, as well as long-running favourites such as *Man bijt hand*, to review some of the terms of its existing contract, which runs until 2011. Neither side would discuss details, but the issue is costs: the public broadcaster wants to save €100 million by 2011. Part of that would come from a reduction of 10% in the cost of independent productions.

However, the terms of Woestijnvis' contract are already set. The company, which was set up in 1997 by some former sports reporters from what was then the BRT, works on an exclusive basis for the public broadcaster, which carries a premium, but which the VRT would like to open up as soon as possible. Not surprisingly, Woestijnvis is reluctant to renegotiate an existing contract, especially when VRT had made it clear that the only way to go is down.

Woestijnvis has other sources of income – it produced the smash-hit film *Loft*, which last week sold its one-millionth ticket. But VRT is a major customer – and a prestigious one. The public broadcaster, meanwhile, depends on Woestijnvis for much of its viewing audience: *De slimste mens* and other Woestijnvis productions are enormously popular with viewers. "We are in the middle of a domestic dispute, but it doesn't



A scene from *Van vlees en bloed*, a Woestijnvis production for VRT

have to end in divorce," said VRT spokeswoman Diane Waumans.

Sector-wide malaise

The whole independent production sector is currently going through tough times. According to a poll of the organisation of independent television producers VOTP, there were 760 people employed in the sector in Flanders in July 2008. By July of this year, the VOTP expects that number will fall by 100, representing a drop of 13%.

The VRT is not solely to blame; another cause of cuts is the drastic reduction in advertising revenue earned by commercial stations like VTM and VT4. But the result is the same: with less money to spend,

the broadcasters force producers to cut costs. According to production companies, this inevitably leads to reductions in quality. Creative drama series, for instance, are replaced by game shows and so-called "reality" television, while domestic productions are replaced by cheaper imports from the US and Australia.

- Meanwhile, another Flemish broadcaster, Vitaya, has branched out into print, with the release of the new magazine of the same name, launched last week. Aimed at the women's market, the monthly publication is a co-production with Sanoma magazines, publisher of *Feeling*, *Libelle* and *Goedele*. The publishers hope for sales of 65,000 copies a month.

BUSINESS FLASH

Airlines • Brussels Airport

Brussels Airport has confirmed plans to open a low-cost terminal later this year. The move is part of the airport's drive to attract new customers such as Ryanair, the low-cost Irish operator based at Charleroi.

Banking • Kaupthing

Landbouwkrediet, the bank specialised in the financing of the agricultural sector, and its online affiliate Keytrade Bank, are to take over the Belgian activities of Kaupthing Bank, the failed Icelandic financial institution. The two-step deal calls first for the integration of the 5,000 private banking clients. Kaupthing's 16,000 online customers will be integrated into Keytrade Bank's operations by the end of March.

Cars • Volvo

The Swedish car manufacturer Volvo has confirmed its decision to build its new S60 sedan car at its Ghent assembling facility from 2010.

Clothing • AS Adventure

The Belgian outdoor products and apparel retailer AS Adventure plans to open an additional 10 stores this year. The company already operates in Belgium, the Netherlands and Britain.

Construction • Besix

The Belgo-Egyptian building group Besix has taken over Liège-based Franki Foundations, a 100-year-old pile driving company, which is one of the sector's world leaders.

Dredging • De Cloedt

The Antwerp-based dredging company De Cloedt has won a €4 million contract from the European Maritime Safety Agency to develop facilities to handle future oil spills in the North Sea.

Economy • Consumer confidence

Consumer confidence in Belgium recovered slightly this month after falling sharply in the last quarter of 2008, according to figures released by the National Bank. The Christmas shopping period yielded better than expected results. The winter sales also had an early success, and the drop in oil prices contributed to the upturn, the bank said.



Dominique Michel, CEO of Fedis, the Belgian distribution federation, on the first day of the winter sales in Brussels

Imaging • Agfa-Gevaert

The Antwerp-based medical technology and imaging company Agfa-Gevaert is investing some €150 million in its Agfa Healthcare division, based in Canada's Ontario province.

Property • Engel & Völkers

The international real estate franchise operation Engel and Völkers expects to open agencies in Mechelen, Knokke, Bruges and Hasselt later this year.



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Flanders steps in to save KBC

€2 billion injection stops market slide

Alan Hope

The Flemish government last week stepped in to bail out Leuven-based bank KBC with an immediate injection of €2 billion and a €1.5 billion contingency should the bank need it. The move had an immediate effect on the market, with the bank's share price jumping by almost 50% in one day.

The bank approached Flanders Region after a week of repeated falls in the KBC share price. This threatened to produce a repeat of the banking collapse of December, when the federal government was forced to step in to save Dexia and when Fortis was broken up and part handed back to the Netherlands, while the rest was sold to Paris-based BNP Paribas.

KBC managed to ride that storm but didn't have the strength to weather a repeat. Pressure started to build when credit rating agency Moody's said it was downgrading some structured credit instruments held by KBC in quantity. There followed rumours about the bank's solvability, which led to the offloading of shares, sending the price into a nosedive.

The bank's CEO, André Bergen, went to the federal government for help. But KBC is still seen as a Flemish bank, and French-speaking members of the coalition could only consider aid for KBC if there was some sort of equal aid for Walloon business.

But the Flemish government saw the chance to act. Flanders recently announced that it is now debt free and has even had the largesse to hand out money to the region's municipalities to help ease their debt burden. While the federal government failed to act last Wednesday, Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters ordered the Flemish government services to investigate the details of a bail-out of KBC. By 20.00 he had a proposal to put to his ministerial colleagues. They agreed the deal by midnight, and civil servants worked through the night to draw up the necessary papers so that a deal could be completed on Thursday morning before the stock market opened.

The package consists of two parts. KBC will receive an immediate loan of €2 billion, but the government will not take equity, unlike a previous deal at the end of last year agreed by the federal government. Instead, in years when the bank pays a dividend – expected in 2010 – the government will receive interest of



KBC CEO André Bergen

8.5%. The €2 billion will be used to strengthen the bank's capital reserves. The government imposed only one condition: KBC must continue to make a priority of extending credit to small businesses in Flanders, making it possible, at least in some cases, for them to expand out of recession. KBC has the option to repay the loan at any time, at interest of 150%.

The hope is that the capital injection will be enough to calm the markets and stop the share price from falling further. If it is not sufficient, however, the government is holding another €1.5 billion in reserve to step in again.

The immediate results seem to suggest that won't be necessary. KBC took some steps of its own to steady the markets by writing off some risky investments known as collateralised debt obligations, or CDOs. Bergen also

announced some cost-cutting measures, including the loss of 600 jobs in KBC's operations in the Czech Republic. In one day, the share price gained 50% of its previous day's low of €6.09, to close at 11.24 – only half of its value the week before, but a corner had been turned.

"We took a conservative stance when marking down to zero all CDO investments which have not the highest, so-called super senior status," Bergen said. "Meanwhile, we have taken decisive measures to reduce costs and to further reduce the risk profile of the activity portfolio."

BANKING NEWS IN FIGURES

€2 billion

loan from the Flemish government to KBC to increase capital reserves

8.5% = €170 million

annual interest to be paid as a coupon in years when a dividend is paid to shareholders

€3 billion

amount that would be paid back if KBC decides to repay the loan

€1.5 billion

contingency reserve to be maintained in case a further capital reinforcement is needed

1% = €15 million

interest paid on the contingency reserve so long as it remains open

€19 billion

total forecast losses for Fortis for 2008

€12.5 billion

portion of the whole attributable to the disastrous ABN Amro takeover

€5.5 to €6 billion

increase in government debt as a result of the sale of Fortis to BNP Paribas, according to Lijst Dedecker deputy Jean-Marie Dedecker speaking in Parliament

BEER



Obama beer hits the bars

Flemish subsidiary brings out a presidential ale

Ommegang, a Belgian-style brewery based in upstate New York, has launched a beer in honour of the new US president Barack Obama. Known as Ale 2009, the beer was specially brewed for the inauguration on 20 January. The brewery planned to call the ale Obamagang but ran into problems with the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB). "The TTB won't let us call the beer 'Obamagang' on the keg label," said Larry Bennett of Ommegang. "They have also rejected the name 'Inauguration Ale'. So it will be known legally as Ale 2009."

The beer is described as a dark Belgian-style brown ale with "a bit of kriek and a touch of chocolate." In addition, there are notes of cherry, caramel and dried dark fruits, adding flavour to the 6.2% alcohol content beer.

The brewer insists that the ale is not an endorsement of the new president. Yet the label gives the beer an Obama-like pedigree: "Created by blending an African father with an American mother, ageing in Indonesia and Hawaii, then artfully straining outsider politics through Chicago democratic machinery. Obamagang emerges from the bottle with cool, elegant appeal and surprising strength".

Ommegang is one of several US breweries that have won over drinkers by brewing Belgian-style beers. Founded in 1997 and based in a replica "Belgian farmhouse," Ommegang is now a subsidiary of the Flemish brewing firm Duvel Moortgat, based in Breendonk. The news is not so good for Belgians who might want to toast Obama in this country. The brewery says that Ale 2009 will only be available in draught form in certain US cities, including Washington DC, New York and Chicago. Classified as a seasonal beer, it will most likely not be produced after the current beer season ends. So there's not much time left to down a glass.

Susan Parsons

Flanders announces business rescue plan

Ceysens commits €91 million to ease credit crunch

Flanders will invest a further €91 million in the local economy under its second "relaunch plan," economy minister Patricia Ceysens said last week. The first relaunch plan, announced in November last year, allowed for €800 million in investment funding to cushion the shock of the growing economic crisis. "Our first plan in November isn't going to be enough. We need a second wind," said Ceysens.

One main aim of the package is to provide funding for businesses wanting to expand. Banks are increasingly reluctant to offer risk capital, and government funding has so far been sluggish, Ceysens said. Figures released last week by Febelfin, the national organisation that regulates the financial sector, showed that credit availability had risen in the fourth quarter of 2008 in comparison to the same period the year before, and also over the third quarter. In fact, Febelfin said, credit agreements had even increased in December, when the banking

sector seemed to lie in ruins.

In December 2008, businesses received €108 billion of credit, compared to €97 billion in December 2007, representing an increase of 11%. "Unlike other European countries, the financial institutions in Belgium have kept the credit supply open," the report begins.

Ceysens is not convinced. "Febelfin maintains that provision of credit is increasing," she said. "But in the meantime we are receiving a number of signals that companies are finding it tough."

The government's new plan, as well as offering €91 million in investment funding, will provide some measures to make it easier to get credit. The government's guarantee scheme, by which the region stands guarantor for certain types of business investment, will be extended to include larger companies. And the maximum sum that the region will guarantee will be increased from €1.5 million to €3.75 million.

The €91 million will be split up as follows: €50 million for the so-called Mezzanine loans to businesses, designed to help financial restructuring; €25 million for the Flemish Innovation Fund, which provides risk capital for investment in innovative projects; the remainder to the region's "participation agency", which will itself lend money to companies.

In addition, Ceysens intends to organise a new round of public funding for the Archimedes Fund, which supports small and medium-sized businesses. At the last round in 2005, the public invested €110 million, and the Flemish government matched that sum. "By next year those resources will be used up," Ceysens said. "I'm convinced we can raise a reasonable amount. Investors are more likely these days to trust products where the government is involved rather than the banking sector."

Say goodbye to Hollywood

Flanders' new film commission offers one-stop-shopping for location scouts



Lisa Bradshaw

Picture it: A man in a trench coat slips a secret spy film into your pocket, then jumps from the end of an Ostend pier. Next, you're met by a man on a gloomy bridge in Bruges, who whispers cryptic warnings before disappearing into a thick fog. You take to the canals and are chased by foreign agents into Ghent's harbour before hitching a ride to Antwerp where you find yourself hurrying across Central Station to jump through the closing doors of a train to...

Where to next?

Just give a call to Location Flanders, and they'll set you up with another unforgettable scene. The new film commission is late in coming – most other regions have had film location agencies for years. But they've been quick to pull together a huge number of local locations to suit any need: beautiful and gothic, gritty and foreboding.

"The only thing we don't have is mountains," says Christian De Schutter of the Flemish Audio-Visual Fund, where the Location Flanders regional offices are co-ordinated. "So if you want to make a film about mountain climbing, nope, not here. Apart from that, we've got it covered."

Indeed, a quick look at the catalogue of photos on the Location Flanders website is pretty convincing. The obvious mediaeval cathedrals and castles are present, as well as the high rises of Brussels, the parks of Bruges, the imposing pillars of the University of Ghent and the rusty barges at the Port of Antwerp.

Along with the hundreds of outdoor location photos already on the website, Location Flanders

will add interiors, from Art Deco to contemporary.

"A complete range of locations is really valuable for international productions," explains Wim Cassiers of the Antwerp branch of Location Flanders. "They can go from the sea, to a port, to a mediaeval city. That combination will attract more work."

And it's the international movie productions that Location Flanders wants to attract. Flemish films already use the region to its full advantage, and now the new film commission can take scenes from those movies to international film festivals, like Berlin and Cannes, where location scouts prowl the info tents. This spring, for the very first time, Flanders will be able to take part in the trade show in Santa Monica, California, which is completely devoted to location scouting.

Seeing your city or country on the big screen is fun for audiences, but the main goal, of course, is to get those euros flowing into Flanders. "From the moment you have an international film crew in Belgium, they need accommodation, they need to be fed, they buy things in shops," says De Schutter. "They fly in key cast and crew, but they also employ local technicians and often local cast. Flanders wins."

In fact, Flanders' cities cottoned onto this long ago – along with the fact that film productions bring in the tourists. The Antwerp film office actually preceded Location Flanders by 17 years. In the early 1990s, the city set it up to deal with mostly local requests to shoot commercials and short and feature films in the city. Then, after the success of television cop show *Flikken*, Ghent opened a film office in 2001.



Location, location, location: Ostend, Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp offer multiple personalities to film location scouts

"When *Flikken* showed in the Netherlands, one of the first things Ghent noticed was the considerable increase in Dutch tourists," notes De Schutter. "And the film *In Bruges* is like a 90-minute commercial. They have also seen increased tourism and have had several more requests from other filmmakers."

Even a, shall we say, less than romantic view of a city can attract people. After the run-down flats and grimdest streets of Ostend featured in the spiritedly violent *Ex-Drummer*, young people – for better or worse – took a renewed interest in the city. "They want to

see the locations in real life," says De Schutter.

Both Ostend and Bruges soon followed the first two cities with their own film offices, and the Flemish Region decided it made sense to pull all four together under the Location Flanders brand name. Not only will the resulting collective promotion bring in more and larger productions, but local film offices ensure that if a production company is interested in shooting in Flanders, it will not pull out due to troublesome logistics. No big production wants to come to a city where it's not easy and fast to gain a permit to shoot

in streets and other public places.

Limburg is now the only province without a dedicated film office, but the commission is talking to the authorities about establishing one. The province, however, is no slouch when it comes to attracting productions: Limburg has been home to two big Flemish drama series in the last two years and another series has already chosen it as a setting. (See opposite page.) A film office is sure to follow.

FILM

Riding into America

Aanrijding in Moscou appeals to the toughest critics

Lisa Bradshaw

Aanrijding in Moscou, released internationally as *Moscow, Belgium*, is getting rave reviews from the United States since its release there last month.

What's that you say? A Flemish-language film? Released in the United States? That certainly doesn't happen very often, and 20 cities is practically unheard of. But *Aanrijding* has charmed the socks off Belgian, German, Dutch and French audiences so far, winning two awards during its Critic's Week stint at Cannes last year, and now it's time for the land of Hollywood itself to pay its due.

The film, shot in the Ghent suburb of Ledeberg, finds a middle-aged mother of three (Barbara Sarafian) trading insults – then beds – with a much-younger (and somewhat unbalanced) truck driver, while her jealous estranged husband finds ever more reasons to show up unannounced.

Aanrijding is currently playing in New York and Chicago and is scheduled to release in another 18 cities across the country. It's gritty setting and offbeat humour has appealed to American critics. Reviews are solid across the board with the country's most respected publications chiming in. "Belgian Christophe Van



Do you think Obama will see it? Flemish comedy-drama tours the US

Rompaey gives this light May-to-December pair-up an agreeably mussed, pedestrian milieu," reads the *Village Voice*. "Sarafian's materially weary manner suits the low-key tone perfectly". *The New York Times*, meanwhile, says that "the movie's steady attention to detail lends it a texture rarely found in films about domestic life."

Roger Ebert of the *Chicago Sun Times*, arguably America's most famous film critic, with millions of loyal followers, gives it three out of four stars, writing: "Notice how deeply the director, Christophe van Rompaey, has drawn us into

these lives, how much we finally care, and with what sympathy all the actors enter into the enterprise."

Movie producers are clearly impressed with the film, too: Van Rompaey and Sarafian are in the States right now discussing a possible American re-make.

And *Aanrijding* hasn't stopped yet: it opens in Britain next month.

online

www.moscow-belgium.com

Tongeren vs Genk

New splashy drama series seeks a city

The television station VTM knows that its new drama series, *Dag en Nacht* (Day and Night) will be set in a trendy, modern hotel in Limburg – now it just has to choose which one. Genk, with its famous historical open-air museum, is home to the Carbon Hotel – perhaps not the most romantic name but a fitting tribute to the Medieval city's coal mining background. Tongeren, meanwhile, Flanders' oldest city, hosts the Eburon Hotel.

Both establishments are part of the new trend in chain designer hotels, which offer sleek accommodations put together by young and avant-garde designers. Limburg, meanwhile, appears to be the number one choice for television series, having in the last two years seen the production of television dramas *Katarakt* and *De Smaak van de Keyser*. It has the reputation of being an easy province to work with, but it also extends an economic hand: the province has ponied up €250 million to the production company of *Dag en Nacht*.

Whichever city is chosen will lend another €100 million to the €500 million project. But both city's mayors are quick to point out they will not enter a bidding war. As for the hotels, they're not in competition, either. Both are owned by the Flemish group Different Hotels. LB



The Carbon Hotel in Genk

REVIEW

Dirty Mind

Despite a few setbacks, Flemish action-comedy has energy and brains

Ian Mundell

Diego and Cisse are a team, performing stunts for a Flemish TV cop show. Nerdish Diego (Wim Helsen) deals with the technical side, while Cisse (Robby Cleiren) throws himself through windows and gets blown up.

But then Diego takes a knock to the head while standing in for Cisse, and, when he wakes up, his personality has changed. Now he is confident and eloquent; he feels sexy, and he doesn't care who knows it. He wants to be called Tony, Tony T, as in TNT.

Everyone agrees that Tony is much better company than Diego, but the doctors are worried that Tony's appearance is the result of "frontal syndrome" – brain damage that boosts confidence and sex drive, but ends in reckless behaviour and violent death. Young medic Jaana (Kristine Van Pellicom) sets out to convince Tony that he should have an operation that may cure the syndrome. Tony wants Jaana's telephone number and has no intention of going back to being Diego.

Dirty Mind feels like a dark comedy that has been told to lighten up. Despite the characters' intense emotions and pathological behaviour, they've been dressed up like caricatures from the *FC De Kampioenen* reserve bench. The morbid narrative, meanwhile, has been sprinkled with slapstick that does nothing to move the story along and

frequently sap its momentum.

The good news is that the movie still has a lot of energy and something powerful to say about sadness and personal fulfilment. When it is content to be deadpan, this comes through loud and clear. Played straight, for example, a potentially clichéd scene in which Tony's stepmother makes a play for him turns into something that is

both harsh and humorous.

This is the second film from Pieter Van Hees in the space of a year. He says that it is the middle episode of a trilogy exploring the anatomy of love and pain, following on from his supernatural horror film *Linkeroever*. The progression is a positive one: the plot of *Dirty Mind* is a little more coherent than its predecessor, and when it goes over



Kablooie! *Dirty Mind* gives great explosion

the top at the end, it is with conviction and control. *Linkeroever* left me behind at that point, but *Dirty Mind* took me along.

That said, I did miss Nicolas Karakatsanis' photography from the first film, which made the left bank of Antwerp seem deeply sinister. In *Dirty Mind* the video images translate poorly onto the big screen – with the exception of the stunts. These are put over with all the slow-motion bravado implied by Tony's rise to explosive stardom.

It's here that *Dirty Mind* becomes particularly enjoyable for people following the evolution of the Belgian film industry, since it sends up the visual and thematic obsessions of the slick thrillers that have proved such a hit. For instance, when Tony must stage a gun fight in a derelict building with two Islamic terrorists for his TV show, one is a man with a long beard, the other a woman in a burqa, both girdled with high-explosives. Business as usual!

Equally telling is Cisse's dream that the pair will be allowed to do the stunts for a Hong Kong thriller that has been tempted to shoot in Belgium. In its own quiet way, *Dirty Mind* is the first satire on the brave new Flemish film industry. ★★★☆

online

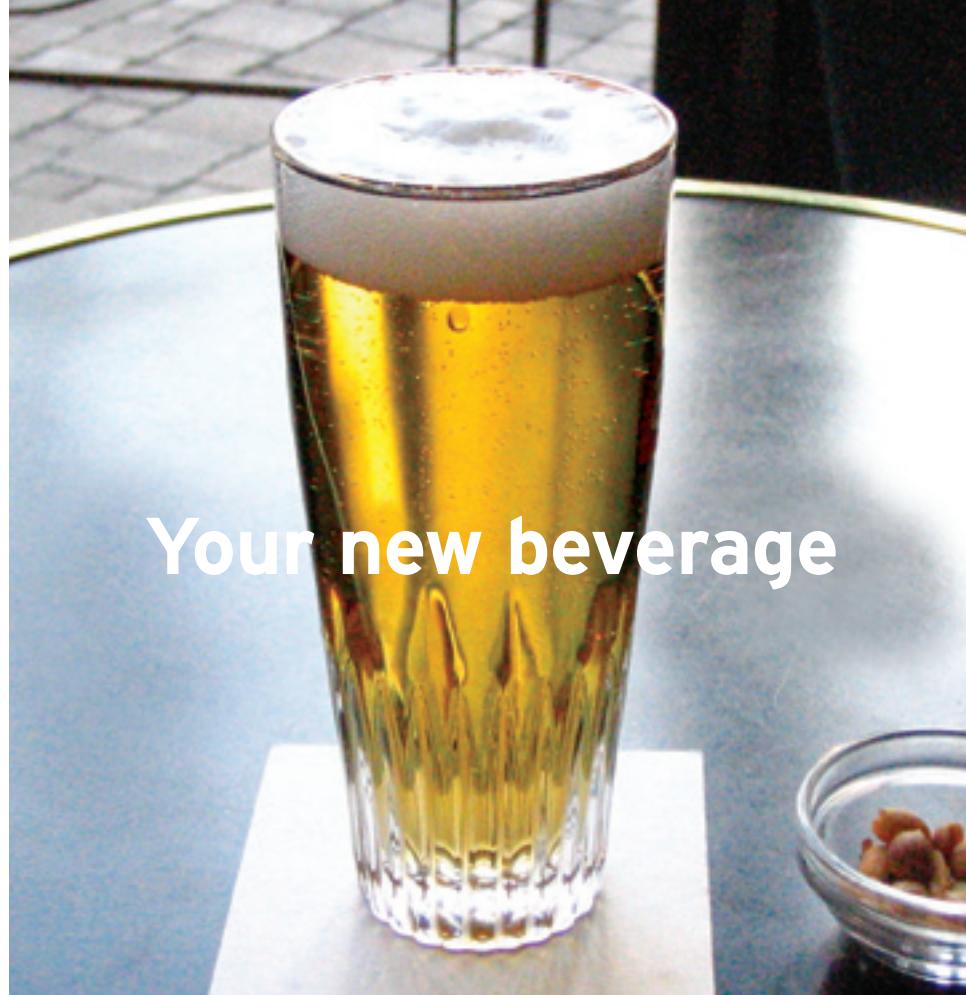
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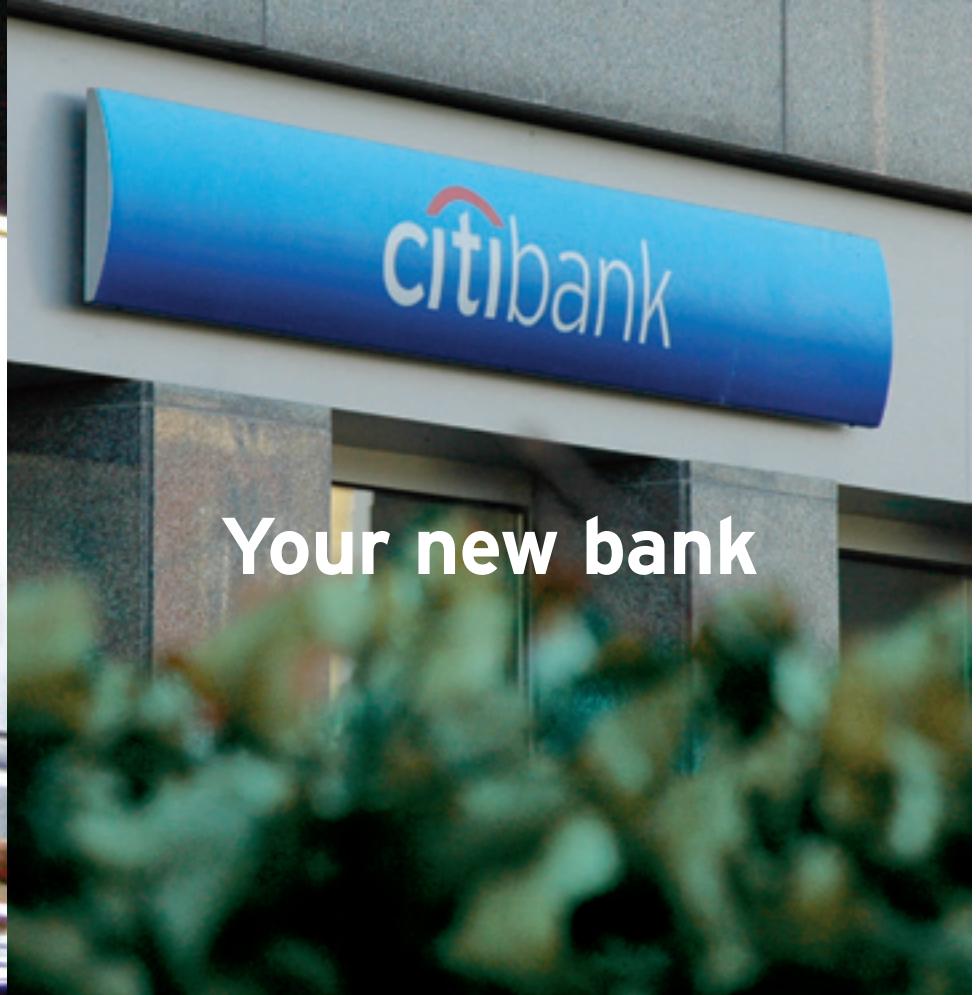
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A touch of glass

A stunning but little known tribute to glass art in northern Limburg

Denzil Walton

The words "Flanders" and "glass" don't usually sit comfortably together. Our neighbours have a much stronger glass heritage: think of the Val Saint Lambert glass factory in Wallonia or the major European glass museums in Leerdam, the Netherlands; Frauenau, Germany; and Sars-Poteries, France.

But now Flanders is firmly on the glass map, thanks to the Flemish Centre for Contemporary Glass Art, otherwise known as The Glass House, in Lommel, Limburg province.

The Glass House brings a number of activities together under one roof. (And what a roof! But more of that later.) Its main goal is to attract and encourage contemporary glass artists and designers. Workshops provide "all the glass-making facilities a budding artist might need, readily available," says Jeroen Maes, the centre's coordinator. "They can create their glass-works on the spot – then take them home or leave them on display." Soon they will be able to put them up for sale in the Regional Tourist Visitors Centre, which opens this year next to the Glass House.

If you don't see yourself as a glass artist, there is still much at The Glass House to keep you occupied. Displays and short films explain the process of glassmaking, right from the moment the quartz sand is extracted from the sand pits outside Lommel, through to the art of glass blowing. You can peer through the windows of the workshops to watch glassblowers and other glass artists at work. "There is even the possibility of having a go yourself," adds Maes. (After a course and under close supervision.)

The Glass House is also an exhibition centre, and since 1995 the town of Lommel has been building



The spire of the Glass House is equally beautiful from outside or from underneath

up its own glass collection. Created by national and international artists, the impressive collection of 36 pieces is now on display. The Glass House also organises three special exhibitions per year, which illustrate different aspects of glass – whether exploratory, artistic, technical, conceptual or thematic. Flemish artists and companies alternate with their internationally renowned colleagues.

The first exhibition of 2009 focuses on the work of De Rupel glassworks from Boom, near Antwerp. The company started production in 1925 and soon became known for its range of hand-blown black vases, hand-

painted with floral motifs. (More familiar may be their distinctive and iconic Duvel beer glass.)

Sand from Lommel and Mol was transported by barge via the River Rupel to the glass factory in Boom. The company employed 400 people at its peak in 1960. But as the decade wore on, the competition from machine-blown glass gradually ground down De Rupel's commitment to handmade work. Finally, the bubble burst and the company closed its doors in 1972.

The exhibition contains about 400 items of De Rupel's glass from various private collections, along with original designs, drawings and documentation.

The Glass House building is a work of art in itself. Designed by Brussels architect Philippe Samyn, its centrepiece is an eye-catching 30-metre-high glass and stainless steel cone. It's visible from all directions and dominates the town – particularly at night, thanks to an array of electro-luminescent diodes. Still, despite its imposing nature, it manages to look quite fragile, as if it might blow away in a sudden gale. It won't, of course, as it's composed of a totally rigid system of triangular frames made of hollow steel tubes. Inside the cone, two identical steel staircases are suspended from the structure and spiral upwards. Ascend-

ing the stairs, visitors pass three exhibition areas, while cleverly placed mirrors enable you to view the entire external structure of the cone.

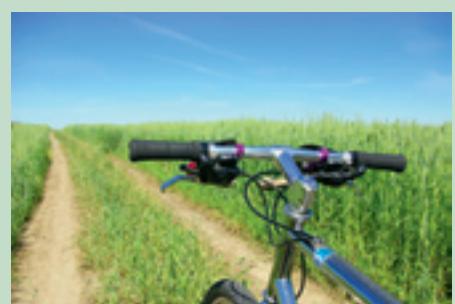
The Glass House is also a green house. The heat of the furnace is recuperated to heat the building, while the rain water falling on the roof is collected and used to cool the glass.

Dorp 14b, Lommel; Booms Glass is on display until 26 April

online

www.hetglazen huis.be

TYRE TRACKS



Mariekerke and the Scheldt

This ride begins below the rooster weathervane of the church in downtown Mariekerke, along the banks of the Scheldt once more. Mariekerke is a picturesque Flemish riverside village, and the stone church, particularly when viewed from the far bank, is one of the highlights of the ride. The cafes on the riverfront make for attractive rest spots and are good to keep in

mind since this is also where the ride ends. Head west along the banks of the Scheldt towards Sint-Amands. Plaques commemorating Flemish poets and their poems about the river line the way on the left, as well as signs for Mariekerke's annual Palingfestival, or Eel Festival, which takes place each summer – an event to remember for those with strong stomachs. Coming into the slightly larger town of Sint-Amands there is a detour on the path – actually a blessing in disguise – directing cyclists along the narrow, windy ways of this ancient-feeling city. Turn right on Kerkstraat back to the Scheldt at the base of the large red-brick church, almost an enlarged version of the church where the ride began. The first record of a settlement at Sint-Amands dates back to the ninth century, and the church here was built in the 17th century. Return to the path along the Scheldt as it continues to the left, into the town of Briel. The setting is more

industrial here, a small vestige of the economic importance this area once had; all the towns passed on this ride were once busy shipping ports. Past the INVA Belgium loading area, the path becomes a dirt road and then returns to pavement heading into the town of Baasrode.

Bear right, following signs now for cycle route 57, past the town hall to the ferry at the base of the third church of the ride, the late-Gothic Saint Ursmarus Church. Take the ferry across the river. The residential part of the ride is over now; the return to Mariekerke will follow the natural parks along the north bank. Once off the ferry, turn right and head back upstream. The churches already passed are even more striking on this part of the ride, seen from a distance and reflected in the river. The path leaves the Scheldt here, wandering out into farmland and silence, so you might easily forget there are towns so close by. On the horizon, the steeple of

the church in Sint-Amands rises, visible at this time of year through the bare branches of the leafless trees. The path returns to the banks of the river now. Pass the ferry crossing for Sint-Amands and continue along the Scheldt to the ferry crossing for Mariekerke. The church across the way marks the end point of the ride. Cross over and stop at any of the various cafes for a drink and a view of the river.

Dave Meyer

Distance:
14 kilometres

Difficulty:
Easy. Good bike paths almost the whole way

Time:
Less than an hour of biking – though there can be a wait for the ferries

Classical & New Music

Antwerp

Amuz
Kammenstraat 81; 03.248.28.28
FEB 1 15.00 HERMEnsemble, conducted by Koen Kessels: Sciarrino, Henderickx
FEB 8 15.00 Nour Ensemble: Kurdish, Persian and European music

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28, www.desingel.be
JAN 28 20.00 Spectra Ensemble, conducted by Filip Rathé: Sciarrino, Goethals
JAN 31 20.00 deFilharmonie & Collegium Vocale Gent, conducted by Philippe Herreweghe, with Jan Michiels and Inge Spinette, piano: Stravinsky, Bach
FEB 5 20.00 Film concert: Geheimnis einer Seele by Georg Wilhelm Pabst, with music by Eric Slechim, performed by Blindman Drums

Bruges

Concertgebouw
't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02, www.concertgebouw.be
JAN 29 20.00 Alexei Lubimov, piano; Alexander Trostiansky, violin; Kyriil Rybakov, clarinet: Stravinsky, Silestrov, Ustvolskaya, Kurtág, Gubaydulina
FEB 1 20.00 deFilharmonie & Collegium Vocale Gent, conducted by Philippe Herreweghe: Stravinsky, Bach
FEB 4 20.00 Academy of Ancient Music, conducted by Pavlo Beznosiuk, with Elin Manahan Thomas, soprano: Vivaldi, Purcell, Handel

Brussels

Get your tickets now for...



Lyle Lovett

22 March, 20.00, Ancienne Belgique, Anspachlaan 110, Brussels. Tickets from 02.548.24.24 or www.abconcerts.be

Fans of American country music have known Lyle Lovett since his debut album in 1986, but it was his surprise marriage to actress Julia Roberts that put him on the front page of every magazine in the country a few years later. They divorced in less than two years, but Lovett's crazy hair, ultra-cool demeanour and occasional film acting have kept him in the spotlight ever after. He and his "large band" play a mix of country-jazz, country-blues and country-chanson that crosses genres of music and fans, making Lovett one of the most relevant figures of Americana music in the last 50 years. Tickets for this show are going to go very, very fast. **Lisa Bradshaw**

Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be
JAN 29 20.00 deFilharmonie and Collegium Vocale Gent, conducted by Philippe Herreweghe: Stravinsky, Bach
JAN 30 20.00 Koninklijk Concertgebouw, conducted by Mariss Jansons: Wagner, Shostakovich
FEB 1 15.00 Belgian National Orchestra, conducted by Eivind Aadland: Mozart, Bartok
FEB 2 20.00 Murray Perahia, piano: Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms

De Munt

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39, www.demunt.be
JAN 30 12.30 Archino Klavier Quartet: Dvorak
FEB 6 12.30 Malibran String Quartet: Haydn, Britten

Espace Senghor

Waversesteenweg 366; 02.230.31.40, www.senghor.be
JAN 31 20.30 En Dialogue... Pierrot Lunaire by Schönberg, performed by Bianco Nero
FEB 4 20.30 Lecture concert on the work of electro-acoustic pioneer Francis Dhomont, with Dhomont and Annette Vande Gorne

Flagey

Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20, www.flagey.be
JAN 29 20.15 Nadar Ensemble & Ictus: Steen-Andersen, Grisey's Vortex Temporum

Miniemerk

Miniemerkenstraat 62; 02.511.93.84, www.minimes.net
FEB 4 20.00 Ricercar Consort, conducted by Philippe Pierlot with Romina Basso, mezzo: Gabrieli, Monteverdi, Bertali, d'India, Castello

Musical Instruments Museum

Hofberg 2; 0475.76.23.32, astoriaconcerts@skynet.be
FEB 1 11.00 Nicolas Deletaille, cello; Jean-Michel Dayez, piano: Mendelssohn

Royal Conservatory of Brussels

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37
Concerts at 20.00:
JAN 29 Orkest Historische Instrumenten, conducted by Ewald Demeyere: Bach, Telemann **JAN 31** Haydn Sinfonietta Wien, conducted by Manfred Huss: Haydn **FEB 3** Andreas Staier, fortepiano: Schumann **FEB 5** Atos Trio: Mendelssohn, Shostakovich

Opera

Brussels

De Munt
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39, www.demunt.be
Until JAN 29 15.00/19.00 Death in Venice by Benjamin Britten, with De Munt Symphony Orchestra and Choirs, conducted by Paul Daniel

Jazz & blues

Borgerhout

De Roma
Turnhoutsebaan 286; 03.292.97.40, www.deroma.be
JAN 30 20.30 Piet Van Den Heuvel Trio
FEB 1 20.30 Glenn Miller Orchestra, conducted by Wil Salden

Rataplan

Wijnegemstraat 27; 03.292.97.40
JAN 28 20.30 Animus Anima

Bruges

De Werf
Werfstraat 108; 050.33.05.29
JAN 31 20.30 Animus Anima

Brussels

Archiduc
Dansaertstraat 6; 02.512.06.52, www.archiduc.net
JAN 31 17.00 Les Archidiucs
FEB 1 17.00 New Morning Trio
FEB 2 22.00 Fris Dane

Beursschouwburg

Auguste Ortsstraat 20-28; 02.550.03.50, www.beursschouwburg.be
JAN 28 20.30 Massot-Florizoone-Horbaczewski
JAN 30 21.30 Aethenor

Espace Senghor

Waversesteenweg 366; 02.230.31.40, www.senghor.be
JAN 28 20.30 Christian Wallumrød Ensemble

Flagey

Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20, www.flagey.be
FEB 6 20.15 Film concert: Piccadilly by Ewald André Dupont (UK 1929), with music by Frank Vagané performed by Brussels Jazz Orchestra

Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193-195; 02.733.13.78
JAN 28 20.30 Carlo Nardozza Quintet
JAN 29-30 20.30 Darwin Case **JAN 31** 20.30 Alex Scorier & Brussels Little Big Bands **FEB 1** 15.00 Family jazz with Tuur Florizoone and Michel Massot
FEB 4 20.30 Thierry Crommen **FEB 5** 20.30 Jazz Station Big Band: special concert Charlie Mingus

L'Os à Moelle

Emile Maxlaan 153; 02.267.10.90, www.osamoelle.be
JAN 30 21.00 Jazz Now: Zongora

Le Caveau du Max

Emile Maxlaan 87; 02.733.17.88
FEB 5-6 20.30 Tenth anniversary concert

Le Grain d'Orge

Waversesteenweg 142; 02.511.26.47
JAN 30 21.30 Lightnin' Guy & The Mighty Gators

Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpstraat 28; 02.512.92.50, www.soundsjazzclub.be
JAN 29 20.10 Singers night **JAN 30** 22.00 Eric Fussiller Quartet with Guy Cabay **JAN 31** 22.00 Sian Jazz Band plus special guest **FEB 2** 22.00 Master Session **FEB 3** 22.00 Tuesday Night Orchestra **FEB 4** 22.00 Chamaquiendo, salsa **FEB 5** 22.00 Alexi Tuomarila Quartet

The Cotton Club - Grand Casino

Duquesnoystraat 14; 02.289.68.66
JAN 31 22.00 Hilde Vanhouve Trio

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
Concerts at 20.30:
JAN 28 LABTrio **JAN 30** Super Sax Battle **JAN 31** Emil Viklický & Steve Houben Trio **FEB 3** The Crawling Kingsnakes **FEB 4** Benjamin Dubray, Ben Prischi, Lander Gyselinck **FEB 5** Steve Houben Trio + Victor da Costa **FEB 6** Steve Houben Trio + Quentin Liégois **FEB 7** Steve Houben Trio + Jacques Pirotton

Pop, rock, hip-hop, soul

Borgerhout

De Roma
Turnhoutsebaan 286; 03.292.97.40, www.deroma.be
JAN 30 20.30 Piet Van Den Heuvel Trio

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24, www.abconcerts.be

JAN 28 20.00 Stef Bos

FEB 4 20.00 Ayo

Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be

JAN 31 22.00 DJ Darko: Statik Dancin' Deluxe (0090 Festival)

Fuse

Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89
JAN 31 23.00 Bpitch Label Night: Paul Kalkbrenner, Lee Van Dowski

Le Bar du Matin

Alsembergsesteenweg 172; 02.537.71.59
JAN 29 21.00 Aka Moon Trio

Le Botanique

Koningstraat 236; 02.226.12.57
JAN 31 20.00 April March + Bertrand Burgalat
FEB 3 20.00 Joy
FEB 5 20.00 Beep

Recyclart

Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34, www.recycleart.be
JAN 30 20.00 Kira Kira + Lucky Dragons
JAN 31 21.00 Martiensgohome + DJ Odessa

VK Club

Schoolstraat 76; 02.414.29.07, www.vkconcerts.be
Doors open at 19.30:
JAN 30 20.00 Only Crime + No Use For a Name
JAN 31 20.00 Juz Kiddin' with DJ Disfunktional/Lefto + Capone Noreaga
FEB 1 19.30 Gaetano Fabri + Taraf De Haidouks

Vorst-Nationaal

Victor Rousseaulaan 208; 0900.00.991
JAN 28 20.00 Chris Brown

Ghent

De Centrale
Kraankindersstraat 2; 09.265.98.28, www.decentrale.be
JAN 29-30 20.00 Frank Vander Linden

Kinky Star

Vlaamsmarkt 9; 09.223.48.45, www.kinkystar.com
JAN 28 21.00 JonGeduld: A Solid Silence

NTGent Minnemeers

Minnemeers 8; 09.223.22.27
JAN 29 20.00 Nashville Pussy + Supersuckers

Hasselt

Muziekodroom
Bootsstraat 9; www.muziekodroom.be
JAN 30 19.30 Turisas + Dragonforce
FEB 2 20.30 Lay Low + Emiliana Torrini

Kortrijk

De Kreun
Jan Persijnstraat 6; 056.37.06.44, www.dekreun.be
JAN 31 20.00 The Black Heart Rebellion + Hitch

Leuven

Het Depot
Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03
FEB 5 20.00 Giant Sand

Stuk

Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20
JAN 29 20.00 Paramount Styles with Soon + Scott McCloud

World, Folk

Ardoorie
Cultuurkapel De Schaduw
Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82, www.deschaduw.net
JAN 30 20.30 29-piece salsa big band

Borgerhout

De Roma
Turnhoutsebaan 286; 03.292.97.40, www.deroma.be
JAN 29 20.30 Kocani Orkestar
JAN 31 20.30 Thé Lau & Maria de Fatima (fado)

Brussels

Art Base
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20, www.art-base.be
JAN 30 21.00 Larisa Quartet (Mexican/Latin)

Espace Senghor

Waversesteenweg 366; 02.230.31.40, www.senghor.be
FEB 5 20.30 Bako Dagnon (Mali, children welcome)

Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpstraat 28; 02.512.92.50, www.soundsjazzclub.be
JAN 28 22.00 Caribe con K, Caribbean

Théâtre Molière

Bastionsquare 3; 02.217.26.00, www.muziekpubliek.be
JAN 30

Antwerp

Antwerpen X
Berchem, Antwerpse Ring; 070.344.555,
www.daens.be
Until FEB 8 Daens: The Musical (in Dutch with French surtitles)

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28,
www.desingel.be
JAN 30-31 20.00 National Company of Tianjin in Peking Opera (dance theatre) (in Mandarin, with Dutch and French surtitles)
FEB 4-7 20.00 Bloet vzw & Comp Marius in Wintervögelchen by Jan Decorte (in Dutch)

Het Toneelhuis/Bourla

Komedieplaats 18; 03.224.88.44,
www.toneelhuis.be
JAN 29-31 20.00 tg Stan in Brandhout, een irritatie (Firewood, an irritation) (in Dutch)
FEB 2-5 Iqaluit and Bonanza, video installations by Berlin (check website for times)
FEB 4-5 18.30, 20.00 & 21.30 Jerusalem, film by Berlin

Monty

Montignystraat 3; 03.238.64.97
www.monty.be
FEB 4-7 20.00 De Rechter en de beul (The Judge and the Executioner), staged by Guy Cassiers (in Dutch)

Stadsschouwburg

Theaterplein 1; 0900.69.900,
www.sherpa.be
FEB 2 20.00 Man van La Mancha, musical with Peter Faber (in Dutch)

Brussels

KVS Box
Arduinckai 9; 02.210.11.12,
www.kvs.be
JAN 29-31 20.30 L'Origine du Monde for Dummies by and with Dirk Van Dijck, Ryszard Turbiasz and Johan Dehollander (in Dutch with French surtitles)

Kaaitheater

Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Vlaakstraat 81; 02.201.59.59, www.kaaitheater.be
JAN 29-31 20.30 Dood Paard & Maatschappij Discordia in Mannetje met de lange lul (Little Man with the Long Dick) (in Dutch)

Scarabaeus Theatre

Hollestraat 19-27; 02.649.79.16
FEB 5-8 20.30 Atelier Théâtral Grec in Le Penalty by Georges Paloumbis, staged by Tassos Nychas (in Greek)

The Warehouse Studio

Waelhemstraat 69a; atc. theatreinbrussels.com
Until JAN 31 20.00 American Theatre Company in The Complete Works of Shakespeare (Abridged) (in English)

Ganshoren

GC De Zeyp
Van Overbeeklaan 164; 02.422.00.11,
www.dezeyp.be
Until FEB 1 Oswald (in Dutch)

Ghent

La Barraca
Muinkaa 16A; 09.222.31.64,
www.labarraca.be
Until FEB 14 20.00 Bloedbruiloft (Blood Wedding) (in Dutch)

Hasselt

Cultuurcentrum - Grote Schouwburg
Kunstlaan 5; 011.22.99.33, www.ccha.be
JAN 28 20.00 Mark Vijn Theatre Productions in Anatevka (Fiddler on the Roof) (in Dutch)

Leuven

30CC-Wagehuys
Brusselsestraat 63
JAN 28 20.00 De Werf in Dummies (in Dutch)

Stuk

Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20,
www.stuk.be

FEB 3-4 20.30 Naar Medeia, staged by Inne Goris (in Dutch)

Visual arts

Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum (MuHKA) Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60,
www.muhka.be
Until MAR 29 Lonely at the top: klankeffecten # 5: works by Juan Pérez Agirrekoika
JAN 31-MAR 27 Le[s] moi[s] de Liziéne, works by Liège artist Jacques Liziéne
JAN 31-MAR 29 Insert the Passing of a Perfect Day (Revisited), installations by Kathleen Vermeir

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28,
www.desingel.be
Until FEB 8 Stellproben, large-scale architectural installations by contemporary Austrian artist Heimo Zobernig (open during performance nights)

Extra City

Tulpstraat 79; 0484.42.10.70
Until MAR 8 Justine Frank: a retrospective, work by the 20th-century Jewish-Belgian Surrealist, who is the alter ego of contemporary American artist Roeke Rosen
Modemuseum (MoMu)
Nationalestraat 28; 03.470.27.70,
www.momu.be
Until FEB 8 Maison Martin Margiela 20: The Exhibition, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Antwerp designer's Paris-based fashion house

Bruges

Arentshuis
Dijver 16; 050.44.87.11
Until SEP 27 The Museum of Museums 2009, imaginary show by contemporary artist Johan van Geluwe

Brussels

Argos Centre for Art and Media
Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.03,
www.argosarts.org
Until APR 11 Language Works: Video, Audio and Poetry, works by Vito Acconci
Until APR 11 I'm With You in Rockland, video work by Karl Holmqvist

Belgian Comic Strip Centre

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80,
www.stripmuseum.be
Until MAR 8 The New Children's Comic Strips, works by young comic strip artists

Bibliotheca Wittockiana

Bemelstraat 23; 02.770.53.33
Until FEB 28 25 Years of Passion Shared, hand-crafted bookbindings since the Renaissance

Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be
Until FEB 8 Lava II, installation by French artist Jean-Marc Bustamante
Until MAR 8 Reality as a Ruin, photographs from Antwerp's photography museum
Until MAR 15 Image/Construction 3 Cities, Brussels, Bruges and Liège seen in monumental photographic montages

Czech Centre

Troonstraat 60; 02.213.94.30
Until FEB 6 The Martinu Phenomenon, life and work of Czech composer Bohuslav Martinu (1890-1959), with archives and photographs

Design Flanders

Kanselarijstraat 19; 02.227.60.60
JAN 30-MAR 8 Austrian Design, innovation and technology

Flemish Parliament - De Loketten

IJzerenkruisstraat 299; 02.552.40.43
Until FEB 21 Fifteen creations by winners of the Henry van de Velde Awards&Labels 2008 design competition

Hallepoort

Zuidlaan; 02.534.15.18
Until JAN 31 Design Textile Paradise, works by students of Brussels' Fine Arts Academy, inspired by objects in the museum's collection

ING Cultural Centre

Koningsplein 6; 02.547.22.92
Until MAR 15 Oceania: Signs of Ritual, Symbols of Authority, sculptures, masks, artefacts, weapons and utilitarian objects from Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia

ISELP

Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70
Until JAN 31 Ligne rouge, installation by Maria Dukers

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63
Until APR 19 Robert Capa, retrospective of the work of the Jewish-Hungarian photo reporter (1913-1954) and founder of the Magnum agency

Kelders van Cureghem

Ropsy Chaudronstraat 24; 070.25.20.20,
www.cavesdecureghem.be
Until MAR 1 Body Worlds 4, anatomical exhibition of human bodies by German scientist Gunther von Hagens

L'Observatoire maison Grégoire

Dieweg 292; 02.372.05.38,
www.maisongregoire.org
Until JAN 31 Videos and paintings by American artist Adam Leech

Le Botanique

Koningstraat 236; 02.226.12.57
Until FEB 22 Dark Pool, photographs and video by Belgian artist Marie-Jo Lafontaine (also shown in the Gesù church, in front of Le Botanique)
Until FEB 22 Angel, photographs by Marie Le Mounier

Museum van Elsene

Jean Van Volsemstraat 71; 02.515.64.22
Until FEB 1 More Than Words, 200 drawings by poets and writers, including Marcel Proust, Gustave Flaubert, Charles Baudelaire, Henry Miller and Günter Grass

Until FEB 1 Paul Delvaux, a selection of works on paper by the late Belgian artist (1897-1994)

Natural History Museum

Vautierstraat; 02.627.42.38
Until AUG 30 X-treme, surviving in the most extreme climates and environments

Royal Museum of Art and History

Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11
Until MAR 8 Continental Superstar, mechanical organs from the Ghysels collection, with recreated dance floor, bar and lighting

Royal Museum of Fine Arts

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

Until FEB 15 CoBrA, major retrospective on the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Cobra movement

Sint-Gorikshallen

Sint-Goriksplein 1; 02.502.44.24
Until APR 5 Archeologie om de hoek (Archeology around the corner), 20 years of archaeological finds in Brussels

Stadhuis

Grote Markt; 02.279.43.50
FEB 1-MAY 10 DeKadence. The Bohemian Lands 1880-1914, paintings, drawings, sculptures and photographs

Tour & Taxis

Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49
Until MAR 31 That's Opera: 200 Years of Italian Music, a look behind the scenes at the making of an opera
Until APR 26 It's our Earth!, interactive exhibition on sustainable development, with interventions by Belgian and international artists

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.347.30.33,
www.wiels.org
Until FEB 22 Un-Scene, works by young Belgian artists

Deurle

Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens
Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23
Until MAR 1 Large format paintings by Dirk Skreber
Until MAR 1 Paintings by Albert Saverys
Until MAR 1 Picture this!, drawings by Benoît van Innis

Ghent

Dr Guislain Museum
Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95,
www.museumdrguislain.be
Until APR 12 The Game of Madness: On Lunacy in Film and Theatre, show exploring representations of madness in films, plays, paintings and contemporary art

Kunsthal Sint-Pietersabdij

Sint-Pietersplein 9; 09.243.97.30,
www.gent.be/spa
Until MAR 29 Flemish wall tapestries from the 15th and 16th centuries

Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK)
Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03,
www.smak.be

Until FEB 22 The Absence of Mark Manders, installation by the contemporary Dutch artist
Until FEB 22 Pluto, installations by contemporary German artist Max Sudhues

Maaseik

Maaseik Museum
Lekkerstraat 5; 089.81.92.99
Until MAR 31 The Terracotta Army of Xi'an: Treasures of the First Emperors of China, warrior sculptures from the world-famous Terracotta Army shown with 200 artefacts from the Qin and Western Han dynasties

Machelen-Zulte

Roger Raveelmuseum
Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00
Until FEB 22 Ensor & Raveel: Kindred Spirits, drawings and paintings by the two Belgian artists

Mechelen

Speelgoedmuseum
Nekkerspoelstraat 21; 015.55.70.75,
www.speelgoedmuseum.be
Until JAN 31 De beer in al zijn staten (bears)
Until MAR 31 Gils, Belgische saga van de elektrische trein (trains)
Until SEP 30 Cowboys and Indians (toys)

Meise

Kasteel van Bouchout, Meise Botanical Garden
Nieuwelaan 38; 02.260.09.20
Until FEB 1 Plantenportretten (Plant Portraits), watercolours by the garden's illustrators

Tervuren

Royal Museum for Central Africa
Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11,
www.africamuseum.be
Until AUG 31 Omo: People & Design, Hans Silvester's photographs of southwestern Ethiopia's nomadic tribes and objects from the museum's collection

Festivals & special events

Djangofollies: Annual jazz festival celebrating the birth of Belgian manouche jazz musician Django Reinhardt

Until JAN 30 at

From Velzeke to Hollywood

Flemish actress Lyne Renée stars in *The Hessen Affair*

Lisa Bradshaw

The Flemish newspapers have huge spreads devoted to Line Van Wambeke this month, or Lyne Renée, as it reads in the credits of her new film *The Hessen Affair*, which opened this month in Mechelen and Turnhout. The actress' last film, *The Box Collector*, went straight to DVD, and it's likely the same will happen with *The Hessen Affair* after its two-cinema run in Flanders.

Dare we suggest that all that ink is being spilled because Van Wambeke, who plays a sultry femme fatale in the English-language *Hessen*, is drop-dead gorgeous? I can just see the editorial rooms at the Flemish dailies: "Who wants to interview this Line Van Wambeke?" The journalists fall over each other to volunteer.

Or maybe, to be fair, they simply like the story. A young woman from Velzeke, East Flanders, with three TV appearances and one movie to her name, up and moves, without knowing a soul there, to Hollywood.

Hollywood is an unforgiving city: expensive, shallow, cut-throat. But Flanders was just too small for Van Wambeke's ambitions.

She arrived, worked as a waitress, made and sold her own jewellery, changed her name to Lyne Renée (sexier, and easier for Americans to pronounce). She had no money, but she did start to make contacts. In a place where who you know is key, she finally got an agent.

She went to 250 auditions, took voice lessons, haunted the bars and restaurants where directors and producers do lunch.

And, voila: two movies followed. They are both Belgian/Canadian productions and may not have made her a household name, but she certainly got a better apartment.

Van Wambeke also tells a good



story, but in a modest, down-to-earth, girl-from-East Flanders kind of way: she is friends with Sienna Miller and Benicio del Toro. She recently met Al Pacino at a film premiere – and he took her to lunch. So who knows? In the place where stars are born, the right person might just appreciate the way she lights that cigarette.

In *The Hessen Affair*, Van Wambeke plays Kathleen Nash, a lieutenant lingering in Germany after the Second World War.

Together with another American officer, played by Billy Zane, she uncovers the hiding place of the crown jewels of Germany. Amid a series of collusions and double-crosses, she sets off to fence them in New York. Van Wambeke delivers all the smoky glances and confident seductions the classic film *noir* heist demands.

Van Wambeke was offered a plum job last year: the lead in the TV comedy-drama series *Louis-Louise*, currently running on

VTM. But she turned it down. It would have meant leaving Hollywood for 16 months. And that was too long for the 29-year-old to spare. And the screen too small. After all, as she told *Het Nieuwsblad*, "In Hollywood, you're only someone when they've seen you on the big screen."

online

www.thehessenaffair.com

MEET THE NEIGHBOURS

Our weekly insight into the Flemish character

City marketing

Marketing cities through movies and television series is a big trend in Flanders. Bruges did it with the dark comedy *In Bruges*, and Ghent has put itself on the international map with *Aanrijding in Moscou*. But no city does it more intensively than Hasselt, the capital of Limburg. It started with the TV series *Katarakt*, which brought tourists flocking to the orchards of Limburg province. And now it's doing it with *De Smaak van de Keyser*, currently showing on Flemish and Walloon TV, which tells the story of three generations in the family De Keyser, owners of a Hasselt jenever distillery.

There was a whiff of city branding from the very outset, with the series title (*The Taste of De Keyser*) gently alluding to Hasselt's slogan "de stad van de smaak" (the city of taste). The Hasselt tourist office, never slow in the marketing department, published a glossy brochure, which was inserted into *Knack* magazine, persuading the Flemish to visit the town in the TV series.

The results were almost immediate. In December the National Jenever Museum saw visitor numbers rise by 30%, while hotels received 15% more bookings. But Flemish people are not stupid, and they started to notice that the TV series included a lot of scenes that weren't filmed anywhere near Hasselt. Someone in Scherpenheuvel recognized an oak tree that stood in their municipality. Another sharp-eyed Fleming noticed that the De Keyser family home is in fact in Lubbeck, Flemish Brabant.

The other towns were angry that Hasselt had taken all the glory. The tourist office was forced to grovel. "We never said that *De Smaak van de Keyser* was all about Hasselt," explained Rob Beenders, councillor for tourism. "We said we were the city of taste, not the city of The Taste of De Keyser."

So what? You might ask. Some years ago, the BBC filmed the Brussels scenes of *Vanity Fair* in Bruges, and no one complained. But Flanders has a long history of city pride that goes back to the Middle Ages, which is possibly why it really matters that a tree in a TV series is located in Scherpenheuvel and not Hasselt.

Derek Blyth

THE LAST WORD

what they're saying about the killings in Dendermonde

The mayor

"We are here because we are touched to our hearts, but most of all we are here because close to here live people who have even more sorrow."

Piet Buyse
Mayor of Dendermonde,
addressing the thousands who
marched in silence on Sunday

The doctor

"Sometimes you wonder, could it get any worse? On Friday in Dendermonde I found out. Yes, it can get worse."

Ignace Demeyer
a doctor who treated many of
the victims

The expert

"A mass murderer wants to be frightening. This is his moment of power. For a short time, he is a god, with the power of life and death."

Jef Vermassen
criminal lawyer and murder
expert

The intern

"Sorry I couldn't save you all."

Joyce
an intern at the crèche,
writing on her Netlog blog at
the weekend

The friend

"I've just had to tell my friend Timothy that his little boy of nine months is gone."

A friend of the family of
Korneel, one of the two baby
victims of Kim De Gelder