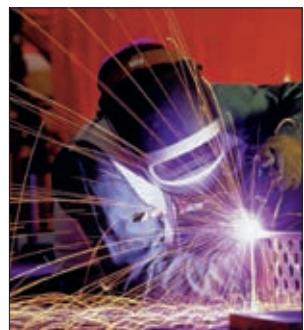


**The weight of the crisis** ..... 6

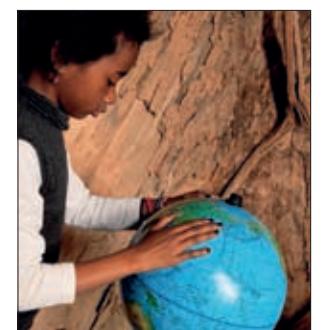
Young male school-leavers are "carrying the full weight of the economic crisis", according to the VDAB. Women, who make up a majority of university graduates, are finding a slightly easier time of it


**Of towers and brains** ..... 9

Both inside and out, it's tough to miss the Flemish at this year's Venice Biennial. Jan Fabre, Wim Delvoye and others are making waves with architectural wonders and outrageous installations


**Stimulating Summer** ..... 10

The kids are about to be home...a lot. Don't let them spend the next two months in front of the TV when there are about a billion activities in Flanders waiting just for them



# A history of destruction

Carl de Keyser's new exhibition at Ghent's Modern Art Museum captures the sadness of a world shot to pieces. Yet the photographer's homeland has seen as much devastation in past centuries – and has risen from the ashes

DENZIL WALTON

**T**he destruction of Ypres and the other towns in Flanders Fields during the First World War are without parallel in history (see *Flanders Today*, 5 November 2008), but two other major events devastated parts of Flanders and led to the loss of property, belongings and human life.

The first is the iconoclasm of 1566 – known in Dutch as the *Beeldenstorm* – when countless religious statues, paintings and buildings were defaced or destroyed. The second is the burning of Leuven by the occupying German troops in 1914, which led to the deaths of hundreds of innocent civilians, the destruction of over 1,000 properties, and the loss of the University

Library with its unique collections of books and manuscripts.

The roots of the 1566 iconoclasm lay in the Protestant Reformation and, more specifically, the belief that excessive commemoration of the saints and their images by the Roman Catholic Church was idolatry.

Other factors contributed. Average men and women were persecuted by the church as heretics. Unemployment levels were high. Poverty was prevalent, particularly after successive poor harvests. With spring giving way to a hot summer, unrest was widespread throughout Flanders.

→ *Continued on page 5*

Flemish photographer Carl De Keyser took this picture of an Afghan man sitting in front of the bombed royal palace in Kabul. It is one of the photographs in *Trinity*, the Magnum photographer's new exhibition at Ghent's Contemporary Art Museum. Split into three parts: "Tableaux of History", "Tableaux of War" and "Tableaux of Politics", the show examines the omnipresence of power and violence: its theatrics, timelessness, glorification, heroism, justification and back-room lobbying.

→ [www.smak.be](http://www.smak.be)

## Human Rights report criticises Belgium

Council of Europe calls on the country to improve conditions in prisons

ALAN HOPE

Unacceptable overcrowding and inhumane detention conditions in prisons; poor living conditions and access to health care for migrants; a lack of effective measures to ensure gender equality; and poorly defined anti-terrorism measures and special investigation techniques: just part of the list of complaints contained in a report on human rights in Belgium published last week by the Council of Europe (CoE).

The author of the council's blistering report, Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg, visited Belgium in December 2008 and held talks with government representatives, magistrates, human rights workers and members of the various parliaments. The procedure is routine and applies to all CoE member countries by turn.

The CoE, not to be confused with the European Council, is the continent's oldest international organisation. Founded in 1949, it now has 47 member states, including most of Europe except Belarus and Kazakhstan. In addition, countries like the US, Canada and Japan have observer status. The most prominent aspect of the council's work is the European Court on Human Rights, which sits in Strasbourg.

The Belgian system of protection of human rights, Hammarberg makes clear from the outset, is generally adequate. But improvements are needed on issues such as the protection of minorities and excessive delays in the judicial system. The procedure for monitoring the police via the General

Police Inspectorate and the P Committee could also be made stronger and more transparent. In particular, the rights of arrested persons should be guaranteed from the moment they are taken into custody, which is not the case at present, Hammarberg reports. In specific areas of policy, however, the report is far more scathing.

Prison overcrowding is a "real scourge" affecting more than three-quarters of prisons and exacerbating detention conditions for both sentenced offenders and those detained on remand before trial, thereby "violating their human dignity". On the days of his visit, Hammarberg found 715 inmates including 44 women in Antwerp prison, which has a capacity of 439. At Vorst, capacity 405, there were 690 inmates.

The state of prisons like Vorst is "a matter for grave concern," Hammarberg reports. Prisons are damp and unsanitary, with electricity and plumbing described as "dangerous". In some cases, "appalling hygiene" forced on prisoners is described as "intolerable".

Detention of migrants in closed centres is frequently unjustified and "questionable". Conditions of detention make it difficult for applicants to prepare asylum applications, and the speed of the procedure for detained persons may adversely affect the quality of the application. Despite moves in a positive direction to stop the practice, there are still families with children being detained.

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## FLANDERS TODAY

### Independent Newsweekly



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## Breaking news

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FLANDERS TODAY  
JUNE 24, 2009

# News in brief

Dutch and Belgian police last week broke up a massive **international drug ring** led by a 48-year-old Dutch man living in Lommel in Limburg province. More than 400 officers executed search warrants in Belgium and the Netherlands, as well as in Dubai. The ring traded in cannabis, cocaine and amphetamines.

The first candidate to **replace Steve Stevaerts** as governor of Limburg has emerged. Armand Schreurs is a comedian and describes himself as "not too young and an ace at cutting ribbons" – one of the three tasks a governor is required for. The others, Schreurs says: opening shops and visiting disasters.

The **popular TV sitcom** *FC De Kampioenen* will come to an end in 2011, the public broadcaster VRT announced. The series will have completed its 21st season, the longest-running on Belgian television. Earlier this year a planned feature film was scrapped after disagreements between producers and the cast erupted. The public remains faithful, however, including to the traditional season of summer repeats, beginning about now.

The rail authority NMBS says it will **improve security procedures** after a practical joker activated the signal to tell a train to depart in Brussels Central Station last week. The signal is given by the train's conductor from the platform using a special key, but the authority revealed that the key, or one very much like it, is easily obtained in DIY stores.

A group of students at Ipsoc college in Kortrijk is protesting at plans to fell a **40-year-old weeping willow** that stands in the middle of the campus. The tree is surplus to the requirements of the director's new landscaping plans, but students have formed a Facebook group, which has attracted more than 1,000 members.

**Flemish teachers** devote an average of eight days every 18 months to professional training, according to a Europe-wide study by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – the second-lowest in Europe ahead of Ireland. Most claim training is incompatible with work hours or family obligations, while others say the training on offer is not suitable for their needs. However, 90% of teachers undergo some

### Existence of church "under threat" as one priest ordained

Only one new priest was ordained this year in Flanders, the Catholic magazine *Tertio* reported last week. The single ordination took place in the see of Bruges. On the other side of the language frontier, however, there were nine new priests ordained and one canon.

"If something doesn't change, the very existence of the Catholic Church in this part of the world will be threatened," commented *Tertio* editor Peter Vande Vyvere. Although the fall in the number of priests was matched by a decline in number of church-goers, he said, "a church community cannot do without a certain number of ordained office-holders". He also called for a decoupling of the questions of ordination and celibacy, while admitting that it was no guarantee of success. There is a similar decline in the numbers of clergy being ordained into the Anglican and Protestant churches, where celibacy is not a requirement.

Nevertheless, Flanders saw 10 new permanent deacons ordained this year. Permanent deacons, who help officiate at Mass and assist priests in pastoral duties, are not required to be celibate. Transitional deacons, on the other hand, are ordained to the diaconate as a step on the road to ordination as priests, and they are required to be celibate. There were three transitional deacons ordained this year, two in Bruges and one in Antwerp.

In French-speaking Brussels and Wallonia, 10 men were ordained to the priesthood, three in the archbishopric, two in Liege, one in Tournai and four in Namur. There were also 10 deacons.



© Boga

sort of training. The survey was carried out among 3,500 teachers in 320 Flemish schools.

judge's independence.

Antwerp city council **intends to ban quads** – four-wheeled motorcycles – from the city centre this summer, blaming noise nuisance and frequent driving offences. The ban could come into force as early as next week and will operate across the whole city, with offenders being fined. Bans on quads are already in force in Brakel, Asse, Maldegem and the Pajottenland police zone.

A woman from Leopoldsburg in Limburg province who **sold her baby to a Dutch couple** for €25,000 will not face charges, the prosecutor in Hasselt said, because Belgium has no law to prevent such a thing. The affair came to light after an investigation by the *Telefacts* news programme on VTM in 2008. The sale itself took place in July 2007. A judicial enquiry followed, but no charges will be brought. "There is simply no law in Belgium to prevent these things from happening," a magistrate said. "There is a hole in the law on trafficking in children," commented top lawyer Jef Vermaessen.



## Council of Europe calls for ban on spanking

Continued from page 1

Asylum procedures have been improved, Hammarberg accepts, but there is still inadequate availability of translation and interpretation and access to legal aid. In addition, appeals against detention, on the one hand, and deportation, on the other, do not take account of the expediency or proportionality of the measure.

The report returns to the fray of language discrimination, which the CoE has previously condemned. Questions such as the Flemish *wooncode* and the refusal to nominate the three French-speaking mayors of municipalities around Brussels show the need

for an independent arbitrator to handle language disputes, it was argued.

Women are paid less than men, by about 11%, and are more likely to live in poverty. The pay gap is wider in part-time work, which tends to affect women more, but absent in the civil service. Violence against women is described as "a significant problem," with over 16,000 cases reported in 2007.

The CoE also called on the Belgian government to make a clear statement by outlawing corporal punishment of children, including by parents, "to send a clear signal to children, parents and the general public". ♦



asylum seekers © Reuters

*The situation of asylum-seekers was a cause for concern*

## THE WEEK IN FIGURES

**70,187**

little Flemings born in 2008, according to Kind & Gezin, a 3.3% rise on 2007. East Flanders saw the biggest increase – 4.8% – and Antwerp the most births – 20,983.

**2.76 million**

people don't need to pay tax, including 497,000 who don't even receive a tax declaration because they're earning too little

**€5,900,000**

in Lottery winnings remained unclaimed in 2007, split between Lotto (€2.88m) and Euro Millions (€2.6m).

**95%**

of people are married or would consider it in the future, according to a poll by Flair magazine

**67%**

believes in eternal fidelity, and expects the same from a partner

**48%**

would consider an infidelity the end of the relationship, but

**31%**

would not own up to a one-night stand

**€56,000**

transferred by the chief bookkeeper of NTGent theatre to her own bank account, according to an official complaint. The fraud came to light when the woman was arrested on another matter.

**7/10**

Flemish GPs consider themselves undervalued, according to a survey by Mediplanet. One in four would rather have been a specialist, and 16% would not advise young people to take up the profession.

**70%**

of computer games enthusiasts is a girl, according to a poll by Telenet digital TV. They play more often, and the top scorer is a woman.

**250**

products from Delhaize reduced in price, including brand names, in what some are predicting could turn into a price war with Colruyt and Carrefour.

**€100**

fine for a baker from Anderlecht caught eating a slice of bread while he was stopped at a red light. Police said it represented driving without care and attention.

**1,300**

unaccompanied minor refugees passed through Belgian refugee centres in 2008. Main home countries: Afghanistan (276), India (208), Guinea (128) and Iraq (80).

## Road works in Flanders: expect delays

Get ready for some waiting getting out of town for the holiday season. The following road works are planned for the summer months in Flanders:

### West Flanders

Kortrijk-Roeselare, resurfacing, mainly nights, to mid-August

### East Flanders

E17 Zwijnaarde, viaduct maintenance, two reduced lanes, 2 July to 11 October

E34 Moerbeke, construction of interchange, serious delays, especially on weekends, until 2010

### Antwerp

E34 Zoersel, resurfacing, one lane each way, until 10 July

E19 Sint-Job-Antwerpen Noord, resurfacing, two reduced lanes, 10 August to 15 September

E19 Rumst-Mechelen, mainte-

nance direction Brussels, two lanes, 10 August to 11 September

Antwerp Ring Berchem direction Netherlands, bridge work, 27 July to 21 August

### Flemish Brabant

Ring Drogenbos, resurfacing nights and weekends until 14 July

A8 direction Doornik, resurfacing, reduced to one lane, until 10 July

A12 Londerzeel, construction of service road, two lanes direction Brussels, congestion expected in morning rush hour, until 10 July

E40 Tienen-Boutersem, resurfacing, two reduced lanes each way, 3 to 31 August

### Limburg

Lummen interchange, construction work throughout the summer ♦

► [www.wegenwerken.be](http://www.wegenwerken.be)

## Prizes awarded to films about God

God is looking for another son, and there are three candidates. To win, all they have to do is beat the others in cross-carrying, making communion wafers and walking on water. That's the plot of the film *God zoekt zoon* (God Seeks Son), the winner of the Golden Maria prize for films about God, organised by the theology department of the Catholic University of Leuven.

More than 140 groups entered the competition, with movies offering an answer to the question: "How and where do you see God in everyday life?" Entries were judged by a jury made up of actors Barbara Sarafian (Aanrijding in Moscou) and Guillaume Devos (Familie), director Felix Van Groeningen (De helaasheid der dingen) and Norbertine monk Chris Jeunen.

The winning entry was made by six students from the Sancta Maria Institute in Kasterlee. "You don't always have to be so serious when it comes to religion," Olivier

Van Goethem, one of the students, explained. "We're still allowed to laugh, aren't we?"

The prize for the most-visited film on the competition website went to Tim Hautekiet and Sofie Van den Eynde from the Sint-Martinus school in Asse for their *God is stereotiep... of niet* (God is a Stereotype...or not). "We did a lot of promotion on Facebook and Netlog," said Hautekiet. "Our film was watched 1,400 times."

The prize for the most original film went to Ellen Perrault and two classmates (who had to stay home from the prize ceremony to study for exams). Their film is called *Ga, overwin en durf* (Go, Succeed and Dare). Finally, the prize for the most visually arresting film went to 19-year-old Mieke Mortier from Gistel for her animated film *God, mijn donsje tegen de wereld* (God, My Blanket Against the World). All the winning filmmakers were awarded video-cameras by JVC. ♦

► [www.oh-my-god.tv](http://www.oh-my-god.tv)

## FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

### Downfall

It's decided: the Flemish government will consist of the Christian Democrat CD&V, the socialist SPA and the nationalist N-VA. But no liberals, even though Open VLD remains in the federal government. This seems normal, as Open VLD was the biggest loser in the regional elections, ending up with just 15% of the vote.

To many people, though (not least the liberals themselves), this is hard to accept, since just two years ago Open VLD's Guy Verhofstadt was still prime minister of this country. What a downfall!

A disappointing election result is one thing. How you deal with it is another. This was illustrated by the socialists in 1999 when they hit their all time low after a series of corruption scandals but still managed to get into government and influence policy because Verhofstadt desperately wanted them in.

Open VLD seems not to have learned from this. After the elections, they did everything wrong. For starters, Karel De Gucht, the outspoken foreign minister, warned that Open VLD would leave the federal government if it was excluded from the Flemish government. His party comrades soon silenced him, fearing that this might actually get tested. Next, Patricia Ceysens, the Flemish economy minister, stated that the nationalist N-VA was bad for Flanders' economy, rekindling the old antagonism between the two parties.

To make matters worse, Verhofstadt himself agreed on a note in which Kris Peeters (CD&V), the future minister-president, proposed to scale down the tax relief Open VLD wanted to double. It was a desperate move.

There are a number of reasons why Open VLD was left out. It is difficult to broker a deal with a party thrown into disarray by the electoral result (followed by the resignation of its party president Bart Somers). Formally, Verhofstadt is now in charge, but everyone knows his mind is focused elsewhere (on Europe, to be exact). Open VLD is now commonly described as "a wounded beast", which does not make it the "loyal partner" other parties want.

Open VLD now looks to its Brussels section. Not only did it do well at the ballot box, going against the trend, it also manoeuvred itself into the Brussels regional government. The Brussels liberal Sven Gatz is now urging his party to be more modest. It has lost the elections, after all.

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A section of the library of the Catholic University of Leuven before and after the sudden fire-storm of 1914

# History of destruction

Despite surviving the iconoclasm, the Leuven library was felled twice in the 20th century

→ *Continued from page 1*

In the Low Countries, converts to Protestantism included Anabaptists, Lutherans and Calvinists. The Calvinists were the most outspoken, and their clandestine churches had been growing despite repression. In 1565, Calvinist congregations emerged from underground to hold open-air assemblies. The following spring, about 50 Calvinist preachers, mostly refugees from England, France, Switzerland and Germany, appeared. Their sermons included repeated offensives against the ancient church.

Tension simmered throughout the summer, until it boiled over on 10 August in the Westhoek, the highly industrialised textile centre of the Low Countries. At the end of a pilgrimage from Hondschoote to Steenvoorde, Protestants entered the chapel of the Saint Lawrence monastery, defaced and plundered it.

As the itinerant preachers moved throughout the land in the coming weeks, so did the accompanying image-breakers. Ghent witnessed its first attacks on 22 August. By the end of the month, the destruction had spread to Antwerp and then further north to Utrecht and Amsterdam, while Valenciennes and Tournai in the south were also affected.

The iconoclasts came from every layer of society. Rich and poor, male and female, young and old stormed shrines, churches, cloisters, chapels and even hospitals. They destroyed images of saints and other works of art, plundered monasteries' stores, drank communion wine and trampled consecrated wafers. They burned or otherwise destroyed altars, baptismal fonts, monstrances, organs, benches, books, choir stalls and tombs.

Their objective was to rid these Catholic symbols of their mystical value and purify the Catho-

lic Church of "papist superstitions". In doing so, the Calvinists believed they were restoring ties with the earlier, purer, Christians and washing away centuries of corruption and the worship of false saints. Their desire was to see purified churches that could be used for reformed services in which the Word of God was the focal point.

The burgher militia remained mostly inactive, except in a few cities such as Bruges. Eventually, Philip II dispatched a large army from Spain to the Low Countries under the command of Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alva, who was appointed governor-general. His objective was to punish the rebels and root out heresy once and for all.

city with a rich architectural heritage. Its University Library, located in the 14th-century cloth hall, was a particularly fine building. Founded in 1425, it possessed exceptional collections. These included theological literature from the early Christian period, medieval manuscripts and writings from the golden age of humanism.

On the morning of 19 August, 1914, German troops arrived in Leuven. The city authorities were well prepared. They had confiscated all weapons in private hands and published warnings that only the Belgian army was entitled to take military action (although it had already left the previous day). The reason for these measures was the news of the cruelties perpe-

that had come under attack from the Belgian army in the north, but in the absence of this information, panic broke out.

Terrified inhabitants were dragged out of their homes, beaten and shot. Executions were carried out on the mere suspicion that someone had fired. The dead were dumped in ditches. Houses were set on fire.

Close to midnight, troops broke into the library of the Catholic University of Leuven and set it, too, on fire. By dawn, little remained of the building and its collections. The library remained burning for several days. In addition to the loss of 300,000 volumes,

the professional documents of 58 notaries, solicitors, judges, doctors and professors were lost.

In all, 248 citizens of Leuven were killed and 1,500 were deported to Germany by rail on cattle trucks. A witness reported on 27 August that: "The town was as dead. Nothing could be heard to break the profound silence except the sinister crackle of houses on fire." After this, for eight days, the city was ransacked, with troops taking furniture, works of art, silverware, linen, musical instruments and wine. Whatever could not be carried off was broken.

The destruction of Leuven aroused international indignation. The Dutch newspaper the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* wrote: "It is so terrible that the whole world must take note of it with the greatest sadness." Intellectuals in Italy condemned the "cultural atrocities," and 40 journalists protested publicly against the "barbarity".

**Just when you thought it couldn't get worse...**

After the war, the Americans took charge of building a new home for the University Library. Under the Treaty of Versailles, Germany was required to donate 13 million marks' worth of books

**"The town was as dead. Nothing could be heard to break the profound silence except the sinister crackle of houses on fire."**

Alva instituted the Council of Troubles, a tribunal with powers to try and sentence all suspects, irrespective of rank or position. It was soon dubbed the "Council of Blood" because of the death sentences it dealt out. Alva's appearance marked the start of the Eighty Years' War.

The destruction caused by the 1566 iconoclasm was immense. "In the Westhoek alone, 400 churches and convents were attacked," says Anne-Laure Van Bruaene of the history department at the University of Ghent. "In Ghent alone, one cathedral, eight churches, 25 cloisters, 10 hospitals and seven chapels."

## Book burning

Three hundred and fifty years later, Leuven was a wealthy univer-

in reparation. A new site was chosen – Ladeuzeplein – where the new library was built from 1921 to 1928. It was designed by the American architect Whitney Warren in Flemish neo-renaissance style. By 1939, there were some 900,000 volumes on its shelves.

However, on 16 May 1940 it was reduced to ashes once more. The exact events are shrouded in mystery. It was certainly a confusing time; at one stage the British army was retreating from the west of Leuven while the German army was advancing into its eastern suburbs.

"There is a verified story that German artillery officers east of Leuven asked a local farmer to point out the American library in Leuven so they could shell it," says Marc Derey, an archivist at the Catholic University of Leuven Library. "Traces of shells were certainly found in the tower, and the German army was always quick to destroy Allied war monuments from the First World War, so there might be some truth in the story. On the other hand, traces of petrol

were found in the burnt-out store rooms, suggesting arson." The damage was even more extensive than in 1914. Almost one million volumes were lost – three times the previous number. Among them were specimens of every book printed in the Netherlands in the Incunabula (pre-1500) period and huge collections by German scholars from the 1920s.

If a human face can be put to the Flemish spirit to rebuild after severe destruction, then it's that of Monsignor Etienne van Cauwenbergh, the long-suffering head librarian of the university library from 1919 to 1961. Not just once, but twice he had to rebuild and restock his library from the ashes. ♦

⇒ [www.kuleuven.be](http://www.kuleuven.be)

# No jobs for the boys

ALAN HOPE

With unemployment rising, young men are finding the going tough

**M**ale school-leavers "are carrying the full weight of the economic crisis," according to a new study by the Flemish labour and training agency VDAB. The number of male graduates – from secondary school to university – looking for work increased by 14% between June 2008 and February 2009, where the total for girls increased by barely 1%.

The latest study by VDAB, which produces annual statistics on school-leavers and their efforts to find their first job, should have covered the period June 2007 to June 2008. But the jobs market has changed so rapidly and radically – with record business closures, the credit-crunch affecting debt and investment, falling orders and massive job losses – the new study extends its

reach to February of this year. In June 2008, the number of school-leavers who were still without work a year after leaving full-time education stood at 9.8%, or 7,600 people. By February, that rate went up to 11.2%; most of the increase was made up of young men with lower educational qualifications.

Choice of study still makes the biggest difference in finding a job. As Table 1 shows, while the level of education is important, some differences are ironed out by the choice of field. So, while there is a significant difference between professional and art studies at second grade secondary level, by the third grade, the situation is more than reversed. And those leaving after professional second grade are almost twice as bad off as those leaving

after general humanities second grade.

The differences continue into tertiary education. Those leaving with a bachelor's in an education-related discipline are more than twice as likely to be out of work a year after graduation compared to those studying industrial science or technology. And at master's level, social science graduates are much more likely to have trouble finding a job than those graduating in business, technology and engineering.

Location also plays a role. Male unemployment is historically low in West Flanders. In Flemish Brabant, there's a growing demand for well-educated applicants, which works in women's favour (about six in 10 of those leaving education with higher qualifications is a woman). The report suggests that school-leavers from other provinces become more mobile in order to take advantage of these local opportunities.

Some 2% of all school-leavers are unemployed after a year and have not been able to find work of any kind. They have "completely missed the connection with the jobs market," the study says. "These young people merit special attention before they risk disappearing into long-term unemployment." ♦

► [www.vdab.be](http://www.vdab.be)

## Y can do

Despite the numbers, graduates optimistic

Among the best-educated, optimism about finding a job is high, despite the economic crisis, according to research from the Vlerick Leuven/Gent Management School. Vlerick has been studying the job expectations of the so-called Generation Y students for the last six years.

The study covered 1,100 students in tertiary education, mainly at master's level. Nearly half were studying economic sciences (43%), with others in law, management, behavioural science and communications.

Despite reports of bankruptcies, cuts and job losses, young people remain "relatively optimistic" about their chances of finding a job in their chosen sector. Those expectations may be unrealistic, says Sara De Hauw, a research associate at Vlerick, when compared with past data on what graduates thought their chances were, and how that changed after two or three years in the job market.

"It seems to be typical of the generation, rather than related to the crisis or the economic environment," De Hauw explains. "They're aware there are difficulties but think they are well enough prepared to meet the challenges. They have quite a high level of self-esteem, actually. But the question of course is, will they find a job and will their high self-esteem perhaps help?"

Some of the main points revealed by the Vlerick study:

- 15% already have a **contract** before graduating, while 60% are actively looking for work
- **Consultancy** is the most popular sector for graduates (39.3%), followed by banking and insurance (35.4%) and telecommunications (26.7%). (But the study features a sample of students in a restricted number of disciplines.)
- **Socialnetworksites**, popular with young people for other reasons, come far down the list as job-seeking resources, long after company and job websites, job fairs and help wanted ads
- 87% said job success was their own **responsibility**, but only 50% had an updated CV or was involved in student jobs and activities that would enhance their prospects
- **Balance** between work and private life was top of the wish list, followed by autonomy. Job security has slipped down the poll since 2004

- Most expect a net monthly **salary** of €1,500 on starting, rising to €2,000 after five years for women, and €2,500 for men, on their own estimate.
- **Loyalty** is a thing of the past. More than half see a job as a stepping stone and intend to stay no longer than three years before moving on.

► [www.vlerick.com](http://www.vlerick.com)



© Oscar F Churn/Shutterstock

Table 1: Educational level and effect on employment

	Total students	Without work after one year	Percentage
<b>All levels</b>	77,900	7,617	9.8
Secondary 1st grade	1,974	496	25.1
Secondary 2nd grade	345	45	13.0
Professional secondary 2nd	4,188	1,066	25.5
Technical secondary 2nd	1,273	217	17.0
Arts secondary 2nd	154	28	18.2
Secondary 3rd grade	5,874	567	9.7
Professional 3rd and 4th	14,756	1,402	9.5
Technical secondary 3rd	13,421	1,260	9.4
Arts secondary 3rd	866	151	17.4
<b>Bachelor's</b>	16,099	876	5.4
Professional	15,886	858	5.4
Education	4,503	432	9.6
Industry/technology	1,739	66	3.8
Academic	213	18	8.5
<b>Master's</b>	15,011	704	4.7
Science	890	46	5.2
Economics	1,446	24	1.7
Business	1,008	26	2.6
Music & Drama	204	26	12.7
Technology	1,588	22	1.4
Social sciences	979	78	8.0
Engineering	785	8	1.0

Source: VDAB

Table 2: Regional differences in jobless after one year

	Jobless as percentage of total students			February 2009		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Antwerp	10.0	10.6	10.3	13.1	10.5	11.8
Flemish Brabant	9.8	8.1	8.9	10.9	7.6	9.3
West Flanders	8.4	7.8	8.1	10.5	8.4	9.5
East Flanders	10.6	9.9	10.3	12.9	10.0	11.4
Limburg	10.1	11.9	11.0	15.4	12.0	13.7
All Flanders	9.8	9.7	9.8	12.6	9.8	11.2

Source: VDAB

# Alpro goes to Texas

**Sale of pioneering soy subsidairy will allow growth in other areas**

Ghent-based Vandemoortele, Belgium's largest privately-owned food company, has agreed to sell soy-products subsidiary Alpro to Dean Foods of Dallas, Texas. The sale price was reported at €325 million.

Alpro, which makes soy-based foods and drinks, made €260 million in sales last year. The company, which pioneered the use of soy derivatives 25 years ago, employs 650 people and has production facilities in the UK, France and the Netherlands, as well as Belgium. Along with Alpro-branded milks, spreads and desserts, the company also produces the Pro-vamel line of bio soy products.

Until now, Dean has been largely limited to the US and Canada. The sale will extend the company's global reach, CEO Gregg Engles said. Alpro products are not sold in the US, where Dean's Silk line is the leading soy drinks brand.

"Earlier this year we decided to change our strategy and concentrate on our Frozen Bakery and margarine and fats activities, which together account for 80% of our group turnover, and which are aimed at professional

and industrial clients," said group chairman Jean Vandemoortele. "Alpro is mainly a consumer product. It would have been difficult for us to continue supporting both growth activities. The sale offers the best chance of future growth." Vandemoortele expects turnover this year of €1.1 billion.

Bernard Deryckere will continue to be CEO of Alpro. "I am very optimistic about the future," he said in a statement. Alpro will operate as a separate division, while Vandemoortele will continue to market the brand in Belgium and Luxembourg; its margarines and fats division holds some rights to Alpro lines.

Dean Foods was one of three contenders to take over Alpro, as well as multinational Unilever and the Finnish Raisio. The income from the sale will, Vandemoortele said, provide the necessary means for the two other divisions to go forward. It will also replenish the company's depleted coffers: last year's acquisition for €300 million of the French producer of deep-frozen baked goods, Panavi, left Vandemoortele with a pile of debt. ♦

## Thousands of credit cards blocked

Atos Worldline, the company formerly known as Banksys, which handles electronic payment transfers, last week took preventive action to block 45,000 credit cards after it discovered a potentially massive fraud operation.

The fraud was discovered in March but, according to a spokesperson for Febelfin, the federation for the financial sector, it is still not known which banks are involved or to what extent. "But the clients concerned will be informed in the days to come," the official said. Customers whose cards have been blocked will be issued with replacements for free; only the card is blocked, not the account behind it. Some reports alleged that Dexia was particularly affected.

There are three million credit cards in circulation in Belgium, used in transactions worth €7.5

billion a year. The fraud is thought to have involved 1,000 cards and some €1.2 million in transactions. Febelfin described the case as "serious but relatively small-scale".

No details have been released as to how the fraud was carried out, other than it involved obtaining data from the magnetic strip. PIN codes and CVC codes – the three-digit number on the back of the card – were not affected. More and more, the CVC code is required for online purchases; the fraudsters would therefore be restricted to less-secure sites which do not ask for it.

The federation reminded customers of the basic rules of credit card safety: keep secret codes secret; watch out for onlookers at ATMs; in case of fraud or suspected fraud, call 070.344.344 to block the card. ♦



Alpro is a pioneer in the production of soy drinks

## THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

### Airlines • Lufthansa

The German airline Lufthansa is expected to receive the European Commission's formal approval this week to acquire Brussels Airlines.

### Banking • Kaupthing

Customers of the bankrupt Icelandic bank Kaupthing are expected to be refunded in early July. This follows the take-over agreement between the creditor banks of Kaupthing's Luxembourg affiliate and the UK-based assets management company Blackfish Capital. Kaupthing customers have had no access to their funds since 9 October 2008.

### Buses • Van Hool

The Lier-based bus manufacturer Van Hool has won a contract worth some €10.5 million from the Scottish Stagecoach company. Van Hool will supply 26 eco-friendly, double-decker buses, which will operate on the popular Oxford to London express service.

### Beer • AB InBev

The Leuven-based beer giant AB InBev is seeking buyers for its central European beer interests in an effort to reduce the \$70 billion debt incurred during the acquisition of the Anheuser-Bush beer group last year. The company has received expressions of interest from five venture capital firms – CVC Capital, KKR, TPG, Cinven and Warburg Pincus. The assets for sale include breweries in Hungary, the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia. Total assets are reported to be worth up to €2.5 billion.

### Insulation • Recticel

The chemical foam and insulation materials producer Recticel is selling its 50% stake in the French Cofel mattress manufacturer to the Spanish Pilkilin. Cofel operates five plants in France with a total production capacity of some 1.2 million mattresses a year.

### Paint • Lanxess

Antwerp-based chemical products manufacturer Lanxess has won a €4 million contract to supply eco-friendly paint for repainting the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

### Textiles • Fair

The Flemish textile industry was strongly represented at the Techtextile fair in Frankfurt last week. Firms such as Sioen (which developed Lipton's new tea bags) and Antwerp-based Luxilon (which supplies the strings for Roger Federer's tennis racket) exhibited their latest technologies. Also present were Bekaert from Kortrijk (heat-resistant gloves) and Dendermonde-based De Saedeleer (carpets using maize fibres).

## Hansen Transmissions on the auction block

Speculation was sparked last week of a possible takeover of Hansen Transmissions after the Indian transmissions manufacturer Suzlon, which owns over 61% of the Kontich-based company, said it was "examining the possibilities". Hansen, which makes mainly industrial gearboxes for wind turbines and other applications, is quoted on the London stock exchange, and last week's price puts a value on the company of about €685 million.

The *Economic Times* of India reported that Suzlon has engaged

a merchant bank to handle the sale. The same newspaper said four contenders for the sell-off have already had tentative discussions with Suzlon. The aim of the sale is to reduce some of Suzlon's €2.5 billion debt. The company also intends to place a bloc of shares worth about €300 million with an institutional investor.

One possible buyer could be the Danish wind turbine manufacturer Vestas, which is known to be scouting for acquisitions, and which has recently put together a war chest of €800 million for the purpose. ♦

## Crisis has cost each of us €12,000, study says

Belgian households currently have the lowest assets in 20 years, according to a study by ING Bank. Because of the economic crisis, the gross national product has gone down by €120 billion, which represents a loss of €12,000 for every man, woman and child in the country between the summer of 2007 and March of this year.

By "assets" the study means cash, deposits, shares, fixed-rate bonds, investment funds and insurance products. Between 1992 (when records began) and the end of 2008, the value of the assets grew

by 80% to €788 billion. At the same time, debt grew by 145%, reducing the net asset increase to €610 billion. The title of the study captures the spirit of the calculation: "Two lost decades for Belgian financial assets".

The damage done by the latest economic crisis, the study concludes, is worse than the effect of the bursting of the dot-com bubble in 2000. Then, the economy lost €113 billion, but this time around share prices have fallen twice as fast in relation to GDP. ♦

## Bellens suspected of insider trading

The financial regulator CBFA was this week reported to be investigating allegations of insider trading against Didier Bellens, the CEO of Belgacom. Bellens is alleged to have bought 50,000 shares in Telindus in 2005 for around €10.50 a share. The Belgacom board, however, had just agreed to make a bid for the network integrator, which valued the company at €16.60 a share. CBFA, which regulates the banking, finance and insurance

industries, is empowered to act as an investigative magistrate in matters of insider trading and to hand out sanctions if appropriate. Bellens could face a fine anywhere between €2,500 and €2.5 million.

While CBFA itself declined to comment, the Bellens case appears to have been three years under investigation, despite the apparent simplicity of the circumstances. ♦



# The real life of photos

Groundbreaking photojournalist Walter De Mulder on view at Sint-Pieter's Abbey

LISA BRADSHAW

**W**hen you are great at what you do, you often serve two functions: deliverer of work to the world and teacher of all those who come after. Open up any Flemish newspaper today, and you will find the influence of Walter De Mulder.

De Mulder was not part of the 1980s wave of photographers who changed the face of photojournalism in Belgium by mixing media and art in a way that reflected a more human side of stories. He came before all of that. But looking at his work at this exhibition in Ghent, you see a little revolution of photography in every shot.

De Mulder was born in Ghent in 1933 and was heavily influenced by German photographers when he served in the army in Germany in the 1950s, the heyday of subjective photography. He worked for decades as a photojournalist, winning many awards. He eventually taught in both Ghent and Sint-Niklaas.

His body of work is enormous, and the abbey has wisely chosen a limited number of photographs, grouped according to three major themes. They've also boldly chosen themes that make this a real artist's show – and yet, in so doing, are offering the visitor the chance to peek inside the closed doors of the art world.

De Mulder, who still lives in Ghent, was well known for his photographs of the world's top

conductors, and the first section is dedicated to these. Interestingly, the dates alongside the photos are not when the photo was taken, but the birthdates of the conductors, placing the emphasis on them rather than the photographer. The photos often reveal the pure nature of the subject – the elusive quality you can't find in a concert hall. De Mulder takes photos that ascribe personality and character, and that is the joy of them – whether or not you are familiar with the artist in the photo.

Conductors are often caught at their most emotional. German conductor Eugen Jochum, for instance, has his mouth wide open. Is he giving orders? It certainly appears so. Polish conductor Jerzy Maksymiuk's mouth is also open – but this time it's clearly a matter of conducting euphoria. Sir Georg Solti wears a huge smile. He is one of the few conductors who gets two photos in this show, and the smile appears in both – a sign he was usually sporting it.

The second portion contains De Mulder's photos of other photographers. De Mulder goes into their homes and workspaces to create what is essentially a history of modern photography.

Here you find Robert Lebeck, one of Germany's most famous photographers, tumbling around the living room floor with his child. In a later photo, Lebeck is much older – but no less jolly. The Hungarian photographer and filmmaker Gyula Halász, better



known as Brassai, who wrote *Coversations with Picasso*, is in his office, looking a bit tired and uncomfortable in his old age. Conversely, the German Peter Thomann is rose-cheeked, with ice skates hanging over his shoulder.

The great Jewish-American photographer and filmmaker Man Ray, meanwhile is pictured not as a dashing, young man flitting about Paris, as many like to remember him, but not long before his death in the 1970s. In a dim room full of

equipment, the old, round wooden table holding his cigarettes and books, he crouches with his cane, cigar in hand, looking like some kind of beleaguered cross between George Burns and Woody Allen.

The final part of the De Mulder exhibition is a selection of photos he took of Ghent artists with a particular focus on the 1970s and '80s. The highlight is a shot of painter Pjeroo Roobjee alongside plastic and graphic artist Fred Bervoets (photo, above). Not only

does it contain the retro-surreal elements of a Coen brothers film, it also emphasises how the look can make the man. Bervoets is only three years older than Roobjee. ♦

## Until 6 September

Sint-Pietersabdij  
Sint-Pietersplein 9, Ghent

► [www.gent.be/spa](http://www.gent.be/spa)

# Summer, bloody summer

The annual holiday thriller book list is out

REBECCA BENOOT

Summer: holidays, relaxation, cocktails, swimming pools. And a good book. This is where Boek.be comes in. Every year the confederation of Flemish booksellers and publishers organises an event that guarantees a long, hot and (above all) suspenseful summer (even if it's raining): Zomer van het Spannende Boek (Summer of the Suspense Book).

This year, 48 thrillers were selected from international and Belgian soil – mystery, crime and political intrigue meant to get your heart racing and keep you on the edge of your seat (or beach blanket).

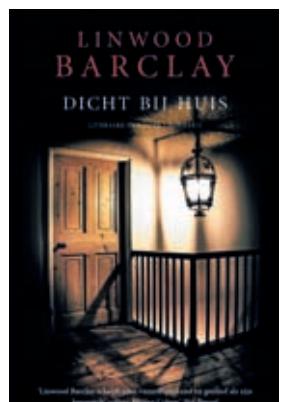
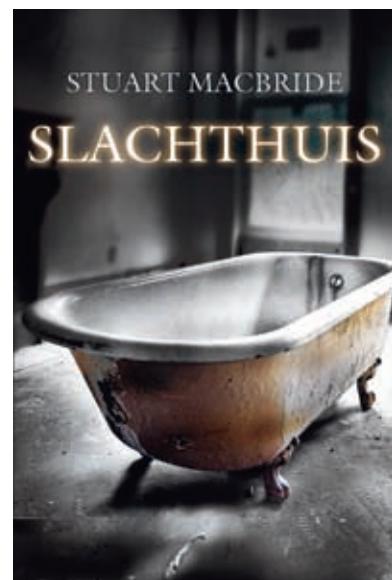
The usual suspects are all accounted for: Pieter Aspe (*Misleid*), Bob Mendes

(*Vuil Geld*) and Stan Laryssens (*Bloedrozen*), whose memoir *Dali en ik*, by the way, is now being turned into a movie starring Al Pacino – not bad for a Belgian.

These authors are accompanied by many other Belgians (Christian de Coninck, Paul Jacobs, Jos Pierreux) and by European and North American authors. David Baldacci's new book *First Family* (translated in Dutch as *Familieverraad*) – about a kidnapping of the US president's niece – is on the list, as is *Too Close to Home* (*Dicht bij huis*), the latest from Canadian Linwood Barclay, which won Canada's top prize for crime fiction and is already a best-seller in Britain.

Zomer van het Spannende Boek not only satisfies the native speaker's blood-lust but also functions as a very good introduction to Flemish mystery fiction for non-natives. Crime fiction is more accessible than a more, ahem, literary excursion and offers an entertaining way to put your Dutch to the test. Many new readers also find that translated text is easier to follow than original Dutch.

Up until 4 August, these mystifying masterminds will be lurking in the shadows (well, truth be told, more like in prominent displays) of a bookstore or library near you. You can also win one of the featured books in a "suspenseful contest" online – a timer decides if



you answer questions about the authors fast enough to win. (Not being quite as sadistic as their authors, they give you a cheat sheet.) ♦

► [www.boek.be](http://www.boek.be)

# Magnifico

## The Flemish in Venice

SARAH MCFADDEN

Other contemporary art biennials may come and go, but the oldest, most venerable of them all has a staying power and resilience that have allowed it to survive two World Wars and countless cultural crises, including the current one.

We're referring, of course, to the Venice Biennale, whose 53rd edition opened earlier this month to the usual festive crush of art world insiders – collectors, curators, dealers and critics. The Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich was there, entertaining in his 115-metre yacht; French billionaire Francois Pinault, who over the past 30 years has assembled the world's largest contemporary art collection (2,000 pieces, more or less), opened his new showcase in the Punta della Dogana, the former customs house newly refurbished by Japanese architect Tadao Ando.

In the presence of such ostentation, the outpouring of hospitality by the Flemish Community, this year's sponsors of the Belgian pavilion, and by Flemish art dealer Guy Pieters (who flew in the band Zita Swoon to set the tone for the party he threw on the Lido) seemed downright modest. Understated, too, (in comparison) is the exhibition staged by Flemish lifestyle/interiors magnate Axel Vervoordt in the Palazzo Fortuny, named after the early 20th-century textile and fashion designer who once lived there. *In-finitum* contains roughly 300 works by 140 artists, juxtaposed to emphasise formal and conceptual relationships bridging vast divides in time and space.

Eastern philosophy and Western aesthetics converge in works by artists famous and lesser-known, and intriguing associations arise. One particularly engaging subgroup points to the suggestive power of unfinished images: paintings left in various states of incompleteness include a 16th-century Italian Crucifixion, a landscape by Cézanne and the ghostly image of the back of a woman's head by contemporary Flemish artist Michael Borremans. All invite the viewer to wander into their unclearly defined regions.

Vervoordt's show is one of the Biennale's 44 official "collateral" events. Sponsored by institutions and individuals, they are held all over the city. But the Biennale's core is in the Giardini, where the permanent national pavilions and part of the centrepiece exhibition are situated. That show is optimistically titled *Making Worlds*, hinting at the fact that our own is in need of renewal and that artists almost by definition propose alternative realms or modes of being in this one.

Oddly – and disappointingly for visitors bent on making new discoveries – many of the most striking works are

by-now historic 20th-century precursors: the Gutai group, Oyvind Fahlstrom, Tony Conrad, Lygia Pape. Granted, this perception may be unduly influenced by the bias of familiarity: time will tell.

The largest installation is "Human Being", a sprawling, multi-media piece by Cameroon-born Ghent resident Pascale Martine Tayou, who has created a darkened village of huts on stilts surrounded by mounds of earth, grains, powdery substances (representing cocaine?) and ritual objects, all engulfed in cacophonous sound. Films projected on the walls of the huts show facets of life in African villages, as well as people at work in other cultures, fabricating goods to be sold in the global marketplace – humans linked at the very least by commerce.

Belgium's was the first foreign pavilion established in the Giardini. Designed by Brussels architect Léon Snyers and built in 1907, it is put at the disposal of the country's Flemish and French-speaking Communities in alternate biennial years. This time it's the Flemish, and their choice is a new project by Jef Geys, a much-admired artist's artist from Limburg province, who famously shuns the art world and whose work is as materially modest as it is acerbically critical, multidisciplinary and enmeshed in real life.

For "Quadra Medicinale", Geys recruited acquaintances in four cities to find, document and research the medicinal properties of 12 plants growing wild in the urban environment within one kilometre of their homes or workplaces. The results are displayed – maps, photos, pressed plants and texts. It is all intended to be published in edible, digestible printed form (the technology is not yet available) as a practical survival guide for homeless city-dwellers.

Geys' ethno-botanical exercise is a model that can be carried out in any city, a project with counter-cultural, human appeal. But it was evidently of limited interest to the majority of art buyers at the Biennale, who waited in long queues to enter the US, Dutch and Scandinavian pavilions but mostly bypassed the Belgian.

No such slight was suffered by the well-publicised collateral projects of Wim Delvoye and Jan Fabre, Flemish artists with stronger followings abroad, they each say, than at home. Fabre was the first living artist to be given a solo show at the Louvre (in 2008). Delvoye, witty and subversive, shot to international fame with "Cloaca", a complex machine designed with the help of scientists to mimic the functioning of the human digestive tract. He followed that up by establishing a pig farm in China, where he could tattoo the animals without legal or



*The latter portion of Jan Fabre's "From the Feet to the Brain"*

other recriminations. (He sold the flesh as pork but marketed the decorated hides as art.)

Delvoye's "Torre" at the Peggy Guggenheim Foundation on the Grand Canal, carries the artist's recent interest in Gothic form and ornamentation to new heights. Between sculpture and architecture, the 10-metre-tall steel tower is but a fraction of the size Delvoye envisions it in its final form. "There are more storeys in my computer," he says.

He hoped to install "Torre" on the roof of the Foundation's Palazzo Venier dei Leoni rather than at its canal-side entrance but was told that it would interfere with the city's skyline. Now, he says, everyone recognizes that he was right. Viewed from the Accademia Bridge, against the distant round dome of the Church of the Salute and the burnished orb crowning Pinault's Dogana, Delvoye's ambiguous, lacy structure looks a bit like a spiky, oversized lantern.

In the Arsenale Novissimo, Fabre is showing "From the Feet to the Brain", a massive, five-part installation. The work's separate sections (feet, sex, stomach, heart and brain) treat the artist's familiar themes: artist-as-warrior, as creative fount and as seeker of truth and beauty. The sex and brain components feature the artist's own effigy.

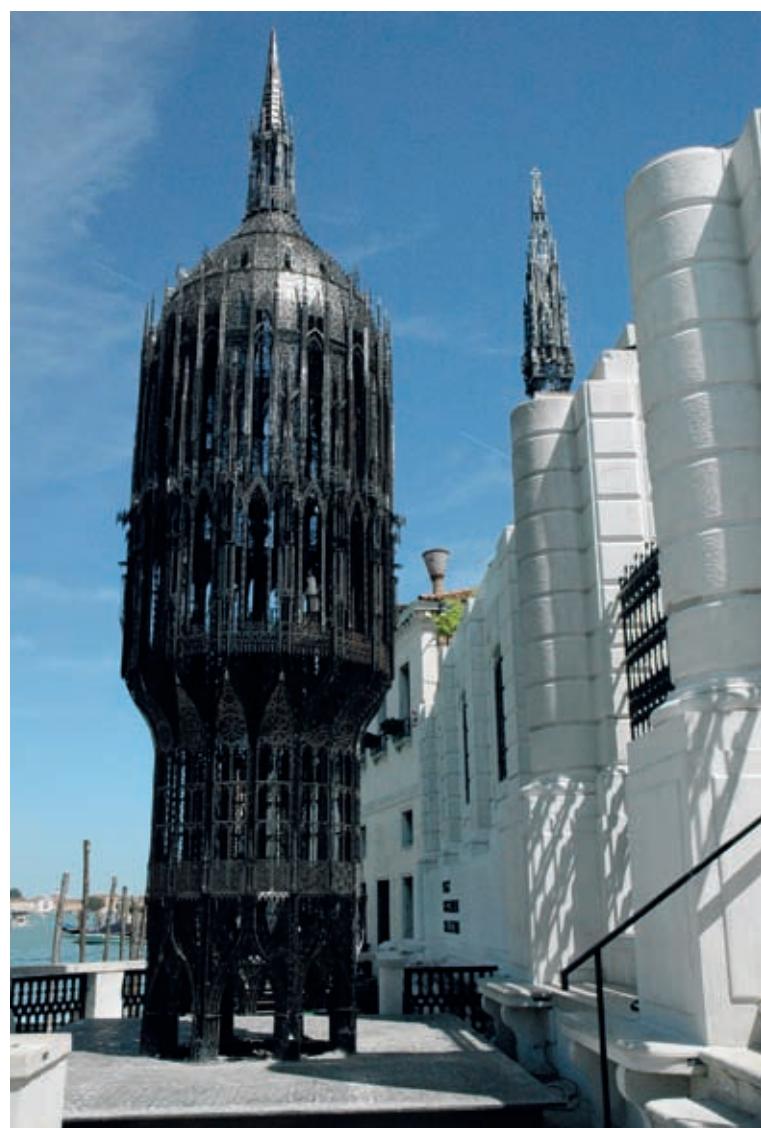
"I'm a provincial artist in a sense. I don't adapt to fashions or moods in the art world. I'm a one-man movement," Fabre tells me, with no false modesty. "My biggest inspirations are scientists. Curiosity is my biggest drive."

And so it is with Koen Vanmechelen, creator of the Cosmopolitan Chicken Research Project, a cross-breeding experiment that has now produced 10 generations of hybrid fowl. "Chickens are a race, like *Homo sapiens*," he says. "We create races in our heads. The cul-

mination of my project will be when the genetic code of all chickens is shown to be the same." He's being assisted by the reputed geneticist Jean-Jacques Cassiman of the Catholic University of Leuven, who will trace the genetic code of all the artist's "works". At the Scuola Grande Confraternita di San Teodoro, Vanmechelen is showing hybrid sculptures of glass and steel, wood, feathers and hide.

"I also give conferences and lectures," Vanmechelen says. "Last year I spoke on diversity at the World Economic Forum. Barack Obama is the Cosmopolitan Chicken. For him, Africa is normal, Arabic countries are normal. Hybrid is the future, not pure race. Break your own cage." ♦

⇒ [www.labienale.org](http://www.labienale.org)



*Wim Delvoye's "Torre" was not allowed to intrude on Venice's skyline*

# Less than lazy summer

## Antidotes to the coach potato fever infesting your home

REBECCA ANDERSON

The last bell has rung, the backpack's been shoved to the back of the hall closet. Ah, sweet summertime. The kids have two months of blissful relaxation – sleeping in, afternoons at the pool, lounging in front of the TV.

If this all sounds great to your kids but less than ideal to you, there's still time to sign your student up – no matter what the age – for some kind of class this summer. Whether it's one day or two weeks' worth, Flanders is packed with summer workshops – from fashion to flying.

### The Fashionista

If your trendsetter speaks even a little Dutch, Antwerp's **Fashion Museum** hosts a variety of weekday one- to two-day workshops that are sure to bring out creative flair. Take a step back in time to the 1960s craze, the paper dress. The museum's current exhibit *Paper Fashion* comes to life in these workshops for ages six to 17, which include a museum visit and designing your own paper dress or T-shirt. For the more serious designers, an early August class involves both designing your own creations and modeling them in a professional photo shoot.

► [www.momu.be](http://www.momu.be)

### The Dreamer

If your little one has her head in the clouds, nurture that creativity at **Turtlewings**, a unique design studio that allows children to be the primary inspirational voices for a variety of artistic and design projects. Three week-long programmes this summer are all taught in English. Children age three to nine can sign up for "One Perfect Picture", where they will learn drawing,



Turtlewings offers design and art workshops to kids up to age 12

ing, painting and printing techniques. From 29 June to 3 July.

Children ages six to 12, meanwhile, have two courses from which to choose. "Design Your Own Room", from 6-10 July, inspires and guides kids to come up with their dream room, and even helps with a budget and blueprint so some of these ideas can become reality (parents willing). From 24-28 August is "Letters", wherein kids find out more than they ever thought possible about letters – you know,

like the ones in the alphabet. Where they came from, along with early printing techniques. Turtlewings is also open every Saturday at 10.00 for a two-hour exploration workshop with rotating topics and activities for kids from four to nine, with no pre-registration required.

Brilliant colours, a dreamy cloud lamp and cheery graffiti smattered across a wall, the Turtlewings workshop is the perfect place to "design, think and play".

► [www.turtlewings.be](http://www.turtlewings.be)

### The Explorer

Sweltering heat pouring down on a sun-drenched village, the sound of methodical drum beats pounding in the distance, brilliant masks and towering fauna. Ages four and up can explore the beautiful continent of Africa in a variety of classes at the **Royal Museum for Central Africa** in Tervuren. Workshops are divided between primary education – museum exploration, artefacts and percussion; and secondary education – traditional and contemporary music, agricultural economies and ethnographic discussions. The workshops are between 90 minutes and half a day and are held in French and Dutch. These summer programmes are so popular, August is already sold out – but July still has places left, so sign up now.

► [www.africamuseum.be](http://www.africamuseum.be)

### The Thrill Seeker

Planes, trains, automobiles and...kitebuggies? Spend a week catching rays and waves on the glimmering North Sea at the **Kite Surf School** in Nieuwpoort. The school offers week-long courses until the end of August for ages seven to 15. Thrill seekers 14 and up are also allowed to participate in adult day and weekend classes. The school offers courses in powerkiting, kite landboard, kitebuggy and kitesurf. We can't really tell you the difference, but check out the website's calendar to see a number of terrifying photos that your teenager will think are the bomb and a complete list of classes, which are available in English, Dutch and French ♦

► [www.kitesurfschool.be](http://www.kitesurfschool.be)

# Tyre tracks

DAVE MEYER



### Small town Flanders

#### Aalst and Dendermonde

This ride combines two lovely Flemish towns in a return trip that makes an excellent ride for a family. Just bring along a picnic and set up camp along the river or plan a long break in Dendermonde before retracing the route back to Aalst.

Begin on the Grote Markt in Aalst below the town hall. Construction on the building began in the 12th century, making it the oldest town hall in Belgium.

Leave the square along Kattestraat. After passing the Sint-Jozef Church, the road becomes Dendermondesteenweg. Turn right at the five-way intersection onto Denderstraat, passing under the railway bridge that crosses the Dender River. Turn left, following signs for intersection 28. Ride along the river beside barges working their way downstream and house-boats moored along the bank. Bike path 28 becomes 29. When the road comes out on the main road, turn right and then left, away from the commercial area and out into the countryside. Geese and goslings, ducks and ducklings – at this time of year this section of the Dender is a veritable family portrait of the bird world, and there is little noise beyond the calls of the mothers corralling their children, the fishermen chatting amongst themselves and the whir of the occasional fellow cyclist.

Continue along the canal to path 27, then 81. The church steeple of Oudergem rises to the left. Bursts of flowers in the fields call out to stop for a picnic or just to soak up the sun, while the Dender continues to meander along to the right.

Pass the sluice to bike path 85, curving now to follow

the railway line over the river into the outskirts of Dendermonde.

Bear left, heading out into the fields, and then left again until returning to the Dender river, bearing right now and following signs for path 84 and then 89. Right again onto the Sint-Jorisgildedijk, follow the path into town. Willows weep low on the water's edge as if admiring themselves in a mirror.

Following signs for bike path 89, weave through town to the Grote Markt of Dendermonde. The beautiful square below the 14th-century belfry (a Unesco World Heritage Site that miraculously survived two World Wars that left the rest of the city in rubble) is the end of the ride. Choose a café and feed your strength: the way back to Aalst awaits.

#### Distance

16 kilometres one way

#### Difficulty

Easy. Peaceful, family-friendly ride along a river and canal between two beautiful Flemish towns

#### Time

An hour each way



# Flemings in New York

## “Can I have chicken with my waffles?”

VEERLE DEVOS

**N**obody really knows how many Flemish live in New York – the Belgian Embassy speaks of 713 registered, but this amount must be much higher, says the director of Manhattan’s Flanders House.

But no one has exact numbers. And nobody really cares either – least of all the Flemings living there. As one told me: “What is nationality in a city of over eight million coming from every part of the world?”

“It’s typical that we Flemings don’t know how many of us there are in New York. The French or the Dutch would never be in this situation,” smiles Philip Fontaine, director of Flanders House. “But we focus on our national situation instead of keeping an eye on the world.”

Fontaine is working on improving Flanders’ profile in the Big Apple through a number of initiatives, including supporting exhibitions like the upcoming James Ensor show at the city’s Museum of Modern Art.

But the young expats who’ve made the massive city their own are not terribly concerned with those efforts. They know they’re not known for talking themselves up – and they readily accept it.

“We have never learned to tell the world how good we are,” muses Sofia Vandaele, general manager of a W Hotel. “In America, children are stimulated – yes you can! – but in Flanders you don’t get much applause for a job well done.” The 35-year-old from Roeselare says she is “rarely” asked where she is from, but she does share “the same entrepre-

neurship and independent way of thinking” as New Yorkers – and that they greatly admire.

And then there’s the idea that a lack of knowledge about their homeland is actually an asset. “They all know Belgium, and it has a very positive image,” asserts Moenen Erbuer, a graphic designer who has also been living in New York for two years. “Worldwide, only a very small number of people know what a mess Belgium is in right now. Well, let’s just keep it like that: let them all think Belgium is a sweet wonderland with chocolate, beer and a good health system.”

Not only do most Flemings in New York not show off their roots, they don’t much seek out their brethren. Sofia is an exception: “I have a lot of contact with other Flemings. Only people who share the same language and context can understand you. If you ever feel a bit homesick, it’s good to be connected.”

When the Belgian-American Chamber of Commerce recently organised a Belgian night, a lot of other Flemings showed up, too. “It’s a good occasion to sing along to Clouseau hits!”

For many Flemish, there is a distinct advantage to being in one of the arts capitals of the world. “Compared to Belgians, New Yorkers are much more interested in art. And it’s not only about the elite, like in our country,” says Manuel Geerinck, a Brussels artist who has been in the city for six years. “Here you actually see families visiting galleries and buying art. People want to see everything with their own eyes,



### WHAT WE MISS FROM FLANDERS

**1** “My family – it’s only when you live abroad you realise how much you appreciate your parents, brothers and sisters. You have so much in common you can’t share with other people.”

**2** “The bread! They really can’t make good bread here.”

**3** “Royco minute soup, zoete koeke, chocotoffs and Lotus speculoos.”

**4** “Relaxed evenings with friends, sharing a good glass of wine after dinner. That’s pure luxury here since life is fast and expensive. People are stressed and in a hurry.”

**5** “The diversity. Within two hours you’re in Paris, Amsterdam or London: capitals with very different cultures. Here in America, you have to take a plane to the other side of the country, but the culture remains more or less the same.”

and art is no exception.” The 40-something thinks this has to do with New York’s origins as a city



David Willems at his favourite laundromat; Moenen Erbuer in the subway

of immigrants. “Immigrants had to rely on themselves, had to be curious and alert, if they wanted to survive.”

David Willems, meanwhile, has spent seven years in New York photographing weddings. Not only is there plenty of work, he has a unique view on cultural differences. “In Flanders young married couples turn their back to the photographer because they feel uncomfortable. Here, they jump at the camera! New Yorkers are much more extroverted than we are.”

The 38-year-old from Turnhout says they also “make a lot more fuss” of their weddings. “Rehearsal dinners – and even sometimes a speech day. And they all have to be photographed.”

By attending a lot of weddings, he says, “you easily see that New York society is organised on the basis of income and race: most marriages are socio-economically homogeneous, and weddings between people from different races are rare.”

But what of that famous melting pot? “That’s more of a nice utopian idea than a reality,” David asserts. “The American Dream is not within reach of everybody – you need at least \$40,000 to send your child to a good university, for instance. So people who marry preferably do so in their own or a higher income class.”

All these expats may love their

region of origin, but not one of them wants to come back anytime soon. “If I was forced to come back, I would settle in Brussels since it’s well connected to neighbouring countries,” says David. “Because in Belgium, people don’t marry anymore!”

Moenen, 24, would only go back if “the dollar crashed. Then the game would be completely over for guys working in publicity, like me. But even then I wouldn’t go back home – I would prefer to move to another world city where I would start from scratch again. This gives you such an insight into yourself that I really would like to experience this sensation again of moving to an unknown place.”

Aside from professional reasons, it’s mainly New York’s progressive mentality that keeps our Flemings in the city. “In the whole world, there is no city like New York,” says Fontaine. It’s also a country, he says, “where a first-generation African-American became president with 60% of his votes coming from whites. I don’t see something similar happening in Europe in the next 50 years.”

It’s in the water, according to Moenen. “New York is surrounded by water. Most cities founded near an ocean or sea have a lot of energy, and I need that. Brussels completely lacks that connection with the water. So I’m pretty sure I’ll stay in the city of *Moby Dick* as long I can!” ♦

### WEIRD GUYS THOSE NEW YORKERS

- “Differences are fun, and I witness them every day. People who ask ‘can I have chicken with my waffles?’ For them it’s as normal as can be since this is a well known dish in African-American cuisine; but I would never even *think* about eating that!” (Thomas De Geest, a Fleming who sells Belgian waffles from his van on the streets of New York)
- “People are very direct since they live all together in a small spot. They tell you immediately what they think without losing time. They’re polite though.”
- “Real New Yorkers don’t cook – many of them don’t even have a real kitchen since their apartments are so very small. They live on the street mainly and go out for lunch and dinner.”
- “Mind yourself because there’s a law for everything. So be very polite to the taxi driver, the garbage man and your teacher. Behave, because before you know it, they sue you.”

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# ♦ Agenda ♦

## Museum Day

Bruges hosts this day for young and old with outdoor demonstrations by costumed hosts, music and loads of hands-on activities. All completely free of charge

→ [www.brugge.be](http://www.brugge.be)



FLANDERS TODAY  
JUNE 24, 2009



# Brussels European Film Festival

SAFFINA RANA

Expect a fierce fight between the 14 films battling it out for €35,000 worth of prizes at the Brussels European Film Festival this year, since most of them have already bagged an award from other festivals on the way to Brussels.

Peter Strickland's powerful first film *Katalin Varga* (photo), in which a Transylvanian woman goes in search of her rapists and the father of her child a decade later, walked off with a Silver Bear at Berlin this year. Another debut, *Wrong Rosary* by director Mahmut Fazil Coskun – a sensitive love story between a young Turkish muezzin whose job it is to call the faithful to prayer and a sheltered woman raised to be a nun, won a Tiger at Rotterdam.

Challenging them will be the Belgian film *Somewhere Between Here and Now*. Set in Brussels, the drama by Olivier Boonjing follows the chance encounter between an American leaving the country and a Belgian coming home. "We produced it with just about no budget," says Boonjing. "All we had went into tapes, food and some shooting permits we couldn't avoid."

The opening film on 27 June is

the vibrant and lyrical *Unmade Beds* by Alex Dos Santos. His second film, it tells the tale of two young, European migrants adrift in London, searching for themselves and indulging in a lot of bed hopping.

The festival is renowned for giving new talent a push by showcasing films by first- and second-time directors. But this year it breaks its rule by screening several films contending for the European Parliament's Lux prize for European cinema. These include the excellent *North* by Norwegian director Rune Denstad Langlo and *35 Rhums* by Claire Denis of France. (All MEPs are eligible to vote, but last year only 131 of the 700 or so took part.)

There's also a special screening to honour the president of the jury, German filmmaker Hannes Stöhr. His last film *Berlin Calling* about a DJ with a drug problem, will be shown on 2 July, followed by Berlin DJs hitting the decks at Café Belga.

Together with the Royal Belgian Film Archive, the festival will host Cinédecouvertes, 21 films selected from the Cannes, Berlin, Rotterdam, and Toronto film festivals

that don't yet have a distributor in Belgium.

But if sitting in a dark room while the sun is out isn't your idea of fun, join the revellers at the free outdoor concerts and screenings. This year's gems include the wonderful *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* and *Together*.

**27 June to 5 July**

Flagey, Heilig Kruisplein,  
Brussels

→ [www.brusselsfilmfestival.eu](http://www.brusselsfilmfestival.eu)



## MORE FILM THIS WEEK

Summer Films → *Cafe Vooruit, Ghent*  
New 3D underwater cinema → *Blankenberge*  
Ecran Total begins! → *Cinéma Arenberg, Brussels*

Band

**The Music Village**  
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45  
Concerts at 20.30:

**JUNE 24** H.O.J Quintet **JUNE 25**  
Michaël Blass Trio **JUNE 26** Trigon  
- 7 Steps **JUNE 27** The Cotton City  
Jazz Band **JUNE 28** 21.00 Mélanie De  
Biasio's residence concert

**Théâtre Molière**  
Bastionsquare 3; 02.217.26.00,  
[www.muziekpubliek.be](http://www.muziekpubliek.be)  
**JULY 2** 20.00 Rudy Linka (Czech Rep)  
and Bobo Stenson (Sweden)

**Ghent**  
**El Negocito**  
Brabantdam 121; 0479.56.73.95,  
[www.mi-negocio.net](http://www.mi-negocio.net)  
**JUNE 29** 22.00 Giovanni Barcella  
sessions  
**JUNE 30** 22.00 Trio Déjà Nero

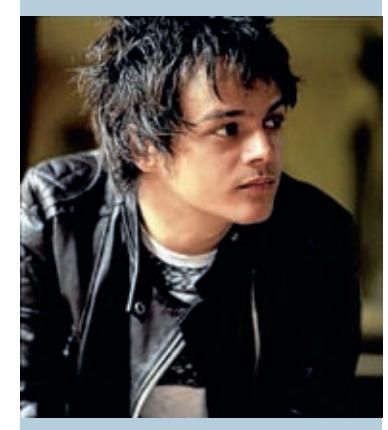
**GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!**

## Ghent Jazz Festival

**8-19 July**  
**Bijloke, Ghent**

This annual event is highly anticipated for good reason: a mixture of avant-garde, modern and traditional jazz, both local and international. Every evening includes three or four artist: BB King kicks it all off with style, paving the way for George Benson, Marianne Faithfull and Jamie Cullum. Flemish rising star Lady Linn plays on the final night. Coming to a close the day after the Gentse Feesten (Festivals of Ghent) begins, it's a nice, easy segue into the craziness of the next 10 days.

→ [www.gentjazz.com](http://www.gentjazz.com)



**Recyclart**  
Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34,  
[www.recycleart.be](http://www.recycleart.be)  
**JUNE 27** 22.30 Fingerspitzengefühl  
Party: Aguila, Piloosji, Dirty  
Soundsystem

**VK Club**  
Schoolstraat 76; 02.414.29.07,  
[www.vkconcerts.be](http://www.vkconcerts.be)  
**JUNE 29** 20.00 TV Buddhas + Drums  
are for Parades + Fucked Up

**Vorst-Nationaal**  
Victor Rousseauaan 208; 0900.00.991  
**JUNE 26** 20.30 Steely Dan  
**JULY 4** 20.00 Simply Red

**Ghent**  
**Handelsbeurs**  
Kouter 29; 09.265.92.01,  
[www.handelsbeurs.be](http://www.handelsbeurs.be)  
**JUNE 26** 20.15 Eddie Kowalczyk, rock

**Kinky Star**  
Vlasmarkt 9; 09.223.48.45,  
[www.kinkystar.com](http://www.kinkystar.com)  
**JUNE 30** 21.00 I h8camera

**Vooruit**  
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060,  
[www.vooruit.be](http://www.vooruit.be)  
**JUNE 26** 20.30 Stash



**Ardoorie**  
**cc 't Hofland**  
Oude Licherveldsestraat 13;  
0479.80.94.82,  
[www.deschaduw.net](http://www.deschaduw.net)  
**JULY 2** 20.30 The Midnight Groove  
Gang

**Brussels**  
**Jazz Station**  
Leuvensesteenweg 193-195;  
02.733.13.78  
**Until JUNE 25** 11.00-17.00 Public  
exams: Royal Conservatory ensembles

**Sounds Jazz Club**  
Tulpstraat 28; 02.512.92.50,  
[www.soundsjazzclub.be](http://www.soundsjazzclub.be)  
**JUNE 27** 22.00 Alex Furnelle Quintet  
**JUNE 29** 22.00 Master session  
**JUNE 30** 22.00 Laurent Doumont Soul

**Vooruit**  
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060,  
[www.vooruit.be](http://www.vooruit.be)  
**JULY 2** 22.00 Boomfanfare



**Borgerhout**  
**Rataplan**  
Wijngemstraat 27; 03.292.97.40  
**JUNE 26** 20.30 Raymond X 4 with  
Raymond van het Groenewoud

# ♦ Agenda ♦

FLANDERS TODAY  
JUNE 24, 2009

## Brussels

**Bozar**  
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,  
www.bozar.be  
**JUNE 30** 20.00 George Dalaras &  
Maria Farantouri (Greece)

**Sass'n Jazz**  
Koningsstraat 241; 0475.78.23.78,  
www.sazznjazz.be  
**JUNE 24** 21.00 Soniquete **JUNE 25**  
21.00 Tango film evening **JUNE 26**  
21.00 Firdevs Eke & Buhara Ensemble  
**JUNE 27** 20.30 Sibel

## Ghent

**Vooruit**  
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060,  
www.vooruit.be  
**JUNE 24** Belgian world music  
compilation release party with Va Fan  
Fahre, Wrong 'em boyo, Zionyouth and  
Radio Taxi (DJ set)



## Antwerp

**Koningin Elisabethzaal**  
Koningin Astridplein 26; 03.203.56.00  
**JUNE 26** 20.00 Flanders Opera  
Symphony and Choir with De Munt  
Choir, conducted by Eliahu Inbal; Irish  
Vermillion, alto: Mahler's Symphony  
No 2

## Bruges

**Concertgebouw**  
't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02,  
www.concertgebouw.be  
**JUNE 27** 20.00 Flanders Symphony  
Orchestra conducted by Etienne  
Siebens: Beethoven's Coriolanus  
Overture, Mozart's Symphony No 28,  
Mendelssohn's A Midsummer Night's  
Dream

## Brussels

**Maison du Peuple**  
Sint-Gillisvoordeplein 37-39;  
02.217.26.00,  
www.maison-du-peuple.be  
**JUNE 26** 20.15 Isabelle Roeland,  
soprano; Céline Lory and Stephane  
Ginsburgh, piano; Igor Semenoff,  
violin; François Deppe, cello:  
Shostakovich's Trio No 2 and Jewish  
songs

**JUNE 28** 20.15 Krupnik: Jewish and  
klezmer music

**Miniemerk**  
Miniemerstraat 62; 02.511.93.84,  
www.minimes.net  
**JUNE 28** 10.30 Miniemerk  
Orchestra and Choir conducted by  
Julius Stenzel: Bach cantata BWV 30

## Gaasbeek

**Gaasbeek Castle**  
Kasteelstraat 40; 02.531.01.30  
**JUNE 26** 20.00 Anneleen Lenaerts,  
harp: Fauré, Wagner, Smetana,  
Debussy, Mussorgsky

## Ostend

**Kursaal (Casino)**  
Monacoplein 2; 070.22.56.00,  
www.kursaalostend.be  
**JUNE 27** 20.00 Queen Elisabeth Violin  
Competition 2009 1st prize winner  
Ray Chen with the Belgian National  
Orchestra, conducted by Rumon  
Gamba: Sibelius's violin concerto op  
47, Elgar's Enigma Variations op 36



## Brussels

**De Munt**  
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39,  
www.demunt.be  
**Until JUNE 26** 19.00 The Marriage  
of Figaro by Mozart with De Munt  
Symphony Orchestra conducted by  
Jérémie Rhorer (Peter Tomek **JUNE 23**  
& 24) and Choir conducted by Piers  
Maxim, staged by Guy Christof Loy

## Justitiepaleis

Poelaertplein; 02.213.86.10,  
www.brigitines.be  
**Until JUNE 27** 20.30 Marollen Opera,  
experimental opera by Walter Hus

## Ghent

**Sint-Baafsplaat**  
070.22.02.02,  
www.vlaamseopera.be  
**JUNE 27** 20.30 Open-air opera:  
Flanders Opera's Samson and Delilah  
shown outside on the big screen

## Vlaamse Opera

Schouwburgstraat 3; 070.22.02.02,  
www.vlaamseopera.be  
**JUNE 27** 22.30 Stardust at the Opera:  
Summer party on stage and in the foyer  
with performances by Lorin, Ferre  
& Esteban, Fredo & Thang and The  
Glimmers with Disko Drunkards Live



## Brussels

**P.A.R.T.S**  
Van Volxemlaan 164; 02.344.55.98,  
www.parts.be  
**Until JUNE 27** 16.00/20.00  
Performances by P.A.R.T.S. students,  
choreographies based on Anne Teresa  
De Keersmaeker's Drumming (1998)  
and Rain (2001)



## Brussels

**Theatre De Poche**  
Gymnasiumweg 1a; 02.649.17.27, www.  
poche.be  
**Until 27 JUNE** 20.30 L'île (The Island)  
(in French), plus Rwandan-Congolese  
night on **JUNE 27**



## Antwerp

**Cathedral of Our Lady**  
Handschoenmarkt; 03.213.99.51  
**Until NOV 15** Reunion: from  
Quinten Metsys to Peter Paul Rubens,  
Masterpieces from the Royal Museum  
of Fine Arts Return to the Cathedral

## Fotomuseum

Waalse Kaai 47; 03.242.93.00  
**Until SEP 13** Fotografie in België  
tijdens het Interbellum (Photography  
in Belgium Between the Wars)  
**Until SEP 13** Theatres of the Real,

contemporary British photography

**Until SEP 13** Geert van Kesteren:  
Baghdad Calling/Why Mister, Why?  
photo-reportage  
**Until SEP 13** Nick Hannes: Red  
Journey, photographs from Russia in  
2008

## Middelheim Museum

Middelheimlaan 6; 03.827.15.34  
**Until SEP 27** Chris Burden, videos,  
sculptures and installations by the  
contemporary American artist

## Modemuseum (MoMu)

Nationalestraat 28; 03.470.27.70,  
www.momu.be  
**Until AUG 16** Paper Fashion, garments  
made of paper and related materials  
concentrating on the 1960s

## Plantin-Moretus Museum

Vrijdagmarkt 22; 03.221.14.50  
**Until JULY 19** In the Way of  
Columbus: Antwerp Books and Prints  
around the World, early books, maps  
and illustrations printed in Antwerp

## Rockox House

Keizerstraat 12; 03.201.92.50  
**Until NOV 15** A Gift to God, private  
patronage of religious art during  
Antwerp's Golden Age

## Bruges

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

## Groeningemuseum

Dijver 12; 050.44.87.43  
**Until JULY 21** Charles the Bold:  
The Splendour of Burgundy, Flemish  
Primitive paintings, armour, tapestries,  
manuscripts, fine gold and silverware  
that were stolen from the Burgundian  
court in the 15th century

## Brussels

**Biblioteca Wittockiana**  
Bemelstraat 23; 02.770.53.33  
**Until OCT 10** The Premises of Comic  
Strip, 19th-century comic strips, with  
works by Rodolphe Töpffer, Caran  
d'Ache, Benjamin Rabier and Fred Isly,  
among others (part of Brussels BD  
Comic Strip festival)

**Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)**  
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,  
www.bozar.be  
**Until JUNE 30** N.i.c.h.e. 360

## Elsene Museum

Jean Van Volsemstraat 71; 02.515.64.21  
**JUNE 26-SEP 13** Fading, works by 40  
contemporary Belgian artists

## Fondation pour l'Architecture

Kluisstraat 55; 02.642.24.80,  
www.fondationpourlarchitecture.be  
**Until OCT 18** De tijd van de boetiek  
(The Time of the Boutique), window  
shopping from 1800 to today

## Hallepoort

Zuidlaan; 02.534.15.18  
**Until OCT 25** Archeologie om de  
hoek (Archaeology around the corner),  
archaeological finds in Brussels over the  
past 20 years

## Jewish Museum of Belgium

Miniemerstraat 21; 02.512.19.63  
**Until OCT 15** Een geheugen op papier  
(A memory on paper), Jewish life in  
Belgium recorded in historic postcards

## La Fonderie – Museum of Labour and Industry

Ransfortstraat 27; 02.410.99.50  
**Until JULY 12** Piemonte industria,  
archival photographs selected by  
Niccolò Biddau documenting a century  
of industry in Northern Italy

## Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.226.12.57,  
www.botanique.be

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**Until JULY 12** Overview, a look at four years of View Photography Magazine  
**Until AUG 9** Stephan Vanfleteren: Belgicum, black and white photographs by the contemporary Belgian artist  
**Until AUG 9** From Belgium, 25 Belgian photographers imagine "their" Belgium in celebration of Bontanique's 25th anniversary, free outdoor exhibition

**MIVB Headquarters**  
 Koloniënstraat 62; 02.515.20.52  
**Until SEP 26** Metro Art Memory, retrospective and genesis of 80 art works in the Brussels' metro, with models, drawings and sketches by Pierre Alechinsky, Paul Delvaux and Hergé, among others

**René Magritte Museum**  
 Essegemstraat 135; 02.428.26.26, www.magritte-museum.be  
**Until JULY 31** Paintings by Liège-born artist Francine Holley

**Royal Museum of Art and History**  
 Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11  
**Until AUG 30** Vegetal City, how to

## DON'T MISS

### Brussels XL Flagey Summer Festival

#### 24 June - 5 July

Free films, free concerts and the seventh birthday party of the Belga Café. One of Brussels' centres of culture, Flagey throws its first summer festival with kids' games by the ponds, open-air cinema and double Brahms from the Brussels Philharmonic and Suyoen Kim. (That's not free, but it's worth every penny.)

→ [www.flagey.be](http://www.flagey.be)



reconcile city and nature, the vision for a sustainable future by Belgian architect Luc Schuiten

**Royal Museum of Fine Arts**  
 Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11, www.fine-arts-museum.be  
**Until JUNE 30** Brussels Comics: Frames of Reference, 20 contemporary Belgian comic strip artists and works by those who have influenced them  
**Until AUG 23** Alfred Stevens: retrospective of the Belgian artist (1823-1906)  
**Until SEP 6** Art and Finance in Europe: 16th-Century Masterworks in a new light, works from the museum's collection

**WIELS**  
 Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.347.30.33  
**Until AUG 2** Luc Tuymans: Against the Day, 20 new paintings by the contemporary Flemish artist

**World Bank Brussels**  
 Marnixlaan 17; 02.552.00.32  
**Until OCT 31** In the Eyes of a Woman: Roma Portraits, the lives of various

Roma communities

#### Deurle

#### Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens

Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23

**Until SEP 13** When the mood strikes...

Wilfried & Yannicke Cooreman's collection of contemporary art, with works by Franz West, Thomas Schütte, Jean-Marc Bustamante and Jan Verheyen among others

**Until SEP 13** Robert Devriendt, paintings

#### Gaasbeek

#### Castle

Kasteelstraat 40; 02.531.01.30

**Until AUG 16** Paul & Cie, look at Paul Arconati Visconti (1754-1821), eccentric resident of Gaasbeek Castle and fervent admirer of Napoleon Bonaparte

#### Ghent

#### Dr Guislain Museum

Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95, www.museumdrguislain.be

**Until SEP 13** Burland Toyland, works made from recycled materials by Swiss outsider artist François Burland

**Until SEP 13** Unknown Secrets, paintings by Serbian outsider artist Goran Djurovic

**Until SEP 13** Mens: Andere culturen als amusement (People: Other Cultures as Amusement)

#### MIAT

Minnemeers 9; 09.269.42.00, www.miat.gent.be

**Until AUG 1** Turkish Textile Workers in Ghent, text and photographs

**Until AUG 23** Felt: From Tradition to Modern Art, work by István Vidák

**Until OCT 18** Ghent on porcelain cards from 1840-1865

#### Sint-Pietersabdij

Sint-Pietersplein 9; 09.243.97.30, www.gent.be/spa

**UNTIL 6 SEPT** Walder De Mulder, photos of conductors, photographers and other artists from the 1960s to the 1990s by the Ghent-based photojournalist

**UNTIL 6 SEPT** Walter De Buck Verbeeld (Visualises), sculpture and drawings by the Ghent artist, singer and founder of the legendary Gentse Feesten

#### Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03, www.smak.be

**Until AUG 2** Dara Birnbaum: The Dark Matter of Media Light, retrospective of the American contemporary video artist

**Until AUG 2** Navid Nuur: The Value of Void

**Until AUG 23** Beyond The Picturesque: Interpretations of Landscape in Contemporary Art

**Until AUG 23** Extra: Meteoriti, sculptures by Bézhan Bassiri

**Until AUG 30** Carl De Keyzer: Trinity, photographs on power and violence by the Flemish Magnum agency photographer

#### Witte Zaal

Posternestraat 64; 09.225.42.90

**Until JULY 4** The Ornamental Body: From Inmate Tattoo to Body Paintings, with photographs by Mariette Michaud and works by 5 artists

#### Hasselt

#### Modemuseum

Gasthuisstraat 11; 011.23.96.21

**Until OCT 31** In Her Shoes, trends and evolution of women's shoe design, from 1900 to contemporary designers

#### Kemzeke (Stekene)

#### Verbeke Foundation

Westakkers 03.789.22.07,

www.verbekefoundation.com

**Until NOV 15** Artificial Nature,

outdoor sculpture and installations by contemporary Belgian and European artists

#### Mechelen

#### Speelgoedmuseum (Toy Museum)

Nekkerspoelstraat 21; 015.55.70.75, www.speelgoedmuseum.be

**Until SEP 30** Cowboys and Indians

#### Tervuren

#### Royal Museum for Central Africa

Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11

**Until AUG 31** Omo: People & Design, functional objects made and used by the Omo people of southwestern Ethiopia

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

#### Waregem

#### Be Part

Westerlaan 17; 056.62.94.10

**Until JUNE 28** A Buster Keaton, contemporary artists Stefaan Dheerde and Richard Venlet in dialogue with the graphic work of 20th-century Belgian artist Marcel Broodthaers



#### Antwerp

**Antwerp Pride:** Gay Pride festival with events organised by the city of Antwerp and its clubs, cafés, fetish bars, bookshops, museums and queer organisations

**JUNE 25-28** in venues across the city and around the harbour www.antwerppride.com

#### Borgerhout

**BorgerRio 2009:** Latin-American parade and festival

**JUNE 27** from 10.00 at De Roma, Turnhoutsebaan 327 03.292.97.40, www.deroma.be

#### Bruges

**Cactus Festival:** Outdoor music festival, featuring Tracy Chapman, Michael Franti & Spearhead, Bunny Wailer, Selah Sue, Paul Weller, Novastar, Black Box Revelation, Joss Stone, Lamb, Calexico and more  
**JULY 10-12** at Minnewaterpark, Bargeplein, Bruges www.cactusfestival.be

#### Museum Day

Bruges museums open their doors and grounds to the public for demonstration of traditional activities like candle-making, beer-brewing, bread-baking, chair-weaving, catapulting and more. Other museums offer free entrance all afternoon  
**JUNE 27** 10.00-18.00 across Bruges www.museabrugge.be

#### Brussels

**Brosella Folk & Jazz:** Annual free outdoor festival with concerts and family entertainment

**JULY 11-12** 15.00-23.00 at Théâtre de Verdure, Ossegem Park www.brosella.be

#### Brussels XL Flagey Summer Festival

A slew of events, most of them outdoors and largely free. Concerts both rock and classical, open-air film screenings, kids' activities and a birthday bash for the Belga Café  
**Until 5 July** in and around Flagey, Heilig Kruisplein 02.641.10.20, www.flagey.be

**Couleur Café:** Annual summer music festival featuring Ben Harper & Relentless 7, Arno, Emir Kusturica & The No Smoking Orchestra, Cesaria

Evora, Bénabar, Shameboy, Zap Mama and many more

**JUNE 26-28** at Tour & Taxis, Picardstraat 3, www.couleurcafe.be

**Midi-Minimes Festival:** Classical music festival with short lunchtime concerts grouped according to historical period. Festival guest: cellist Sigiswald Kuijken  
**JULY 1-AUG 28** 12.15 at Miniemerkerk, Miniemerkerstraat 62, and Royal Conservatory, Regentschapsstraat 30 02.512.30.79, www.midis-minimes.be

**Ommegang:** Annual historical pageant reenacting the entry into Brussels of Charles V and his court in 1549. 1,400 participants in period costume, brass bands, horses and falconry displays. Mediaeval village in Zavelplein with jousting, archery and other activities  
**JUNE 30-JULY 2** from 14.30 medieval village; **JUNE 30 & JULY 2** 21.00 pageant on the Grote Markt 02.512.19.61, www.ommegang.be

**Son del Sur - Flamenco Festival 2009:** Final weekend of flamenco music and dance festival, including Orquesta Chekara de Tétouan (Morocco), Jóvenes Flamencos, Andalusian/ flamenco music

**Until JUNE 26** at Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23 02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be

**Stad Apéros 2009:** Weekly aperitif in different areas of the city  
**JUNE 26** on Laine Square (Vorst) www.aperos.be

#### Dessel

**Graspop Metal Meeting:** Heavy metal festival featuring Mötley Crüe, Slipknot, Marilyn Manson, Korn, Heaven & Hell, Nightwish, Soulfly  
**JUNE 26-28** at De Boerentang park www.graspop.be

#### Ghent

**Beachparty:** Swimming pool, cocktail bar and sandy beach on one of Ghent's major city squares, with DJs including Buscemi and Danny De Funk

**JUNE 27** 17.30-1.00 on Sint-Pietersplein 0900.00.600, www.pesco.be

#### Summer films - Forever Young

Screenings of films about young people in the café of Vooruit, including Persepolis and XXY

**Until JUNE 30** at Vooruit, St Pietersnieuwstraat 23 0900.26.060, www.vooruit.be

#### Leuven

**Terrafilms 2009:** Series of films celebrating the end of the season at Cinema ZED, showing for free in the inner courtyard of Stuk, including Dear Zachary, Hotel Very Welcome, Dirty Mind and South Park: Imaginationland

**Until JUNE 26** at Stuk, Naamsestraat 96 016.32.03.20, www.stuk.be

#### Zomer van Sint-Pieter

Classical music festival with short lunchtime concerts grouped according to historical period. Sister festival to Brussels' Midi-Minimes

**June 30-Aug 28** across Leuven 016.23.84.27; www.zomer-van-sint-pieter.be

#### Werchter

**Rock Werchter 2009:** The 35th edition of the giant rock festival still has tickets left for the Thursday shows, featuring The Prodigy, Oasis, Placebo, Dave Matthews Band, Lily Allen and more  
**JULY 2-5** at Festival Park, Werchter (Flemish Brabant) www.rockwerchter.be

However you choose to enjoy Chez Moeder Lambic, you will definitely feel like you've reached beer heaven.

SHARON LIGHT

## CAFE SPOTLIGHT



### Chez Moeder Lambic

#### Savoiestraat 68, Brussels

If you're the kind of person who has a tough time deciding what beer to order at your corner café, Chez Moeder Lambic might give you a nervous breakdown. This tiny corner bar in Sint-Gilles boasts hundreds upon hundreds of beers, the vast majority of which come from this little country we call home.

Their "menu", better described as a book, features umpteen pages of beers classified alphabetically and by style: whites, abbey, lambics (obviously) and so on. Some beers are so rare, they actually refuse to sell them. Frankly, aside from the connoisseurs (who undoubtedly are already regulars here), you are safest keeping your distance from the menu and poke straight into the brain of the bartender.

## FACE OF FLANDERS

JESSICA ALLEVA

### Marcus Cumberlege

For a quarter of a decade, one poet has been consistently inspired by the town and countryside of Bruges

In the heart of Bruges, amongst curious tourists and busy inhabitants, is a peaceful, green oasis. Flowers bloom, bees buzz; the laughter of children is heard from over the fence. This is the lush garden of Marcus Cumberlege, a poet whose creativity has been fed by Bruges since 1972.

Even though Cumberlege knows Bruges like the back of his hand, the city still inspires him. The 70-year-old has published more than 20 collections of poems, including two from this year alone.

Born in 1938, Cumberlege is of Canadian and British blood. Yet, he doesn't feel Canadian, British or Belgian. He is a "Bruggian", he says. It was love that drew the poet to the capital of West Flanders: his Flemish wife, Maria, had family there. And since Cumberlege had already lived in many busy cities (Paris, London, Lima), Bruges was the perfect choice for settling down. "I like the quiet of the place and the beauty of the inhabitants," he says. "The poetic surroundings appeal to me."

Cumberlege's poems are inspired by the surrounding nature. "Not only the green nature," he points out, "but the urban nature." He strolls through Astrid Park or sits in one of his favourite cafes (Delicieux or Passion for Food), always with a notebook in hand.

Cumberlege participates in the Lappersfort Poet Society, a group of local poets whose members read their work in the Lappersfort forest, just outside of Bruges' centre. It's an area of woodland that is in danger of being destroyed for industry. Although Cumberlege says he is not a "hardcore Lappersforter", he is indeed



a tree hugger and adamant about protecting nature in his beloved city. On 21 June, Cumberlege will enter the forest once again with three other poets for a reading themed *A Mid Summer Night's Dream*.  
Aside from Bruges, Cumberlege is profoundly inspired by another love – that for his wife. The couple has been married for over 30 years, and his feelings are clear in his poetry. "I am very lucky to have my wife.

### EVERYTHING

God as I understand Him;  
The brown plates, the furniture,  
The meal I am preparing –  
Whatever is in front of me.  
The people in my life today  
Restoring me to sanity;  
The cleaning lady, the chemist,  
My teacher, my partner, myself.  
The leaves clinging to their branches,  
The letters that come from France.  
I see God in everything.  
I surrender to Joy and Peace.

from  
*In a Nutshell: Shin Buddhist Poems*

She works full time and still finds time to look after me," Cumberlege says. "And after 40 years, I still need a certain amount of looking after."

The poet's latest book, *In a Nutshell: Shin Buddhist Poems*, is a special accomplishment, since he had always dreamed of putting all of his Buddhist poems into one book. Buddhism can also be found in *Leaves painted gold to please a child*, his other book of poems from this year. In fact, Cumberlege says that every fifth poem is a morning meditation. "Every morning I read one of my meditations; I try to pick myself up and pump joy and courage into my day." Cumberlege is not shy to admit that, nine times out of 10, he wakes up feeling gloomy. His poems serve as a bit of spiritual therapy.

Cumberlege sees writing as part of a growing-up process; he plans to be "grown up" by the age of 80. "Not everything I write is good...but it is has meaning to me."

Whether inspired by Bruges, love, or religion, Cumberlege's poems strike a chord in the hearts of readers who find meaning in their beauty, too.

→ [www.marcuscumberlege.com](http://www.marcuscumberlege.com)

## TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



### roeping →

Most people who work do so primarily for the money, and if you are one of the growing number of unlucky ones who have been invited to join the flexible workforce pool you will know what a difference having a job makes.

Some of you may work because you have been called – perhaps you are a priest or a school-teacher – and your reward in addition to your salary is the gratitude of your flock or your pupils.

Now think of jobs that are poorly paid and that no one really values. Dare I start a list? No, but I'll give you one which I'm sure hardly any of you would like to do: *een toiletjuffrouw* – a toilet lady.

You will only have had to heed the call of nature a couple of times when you have been out and about in Belgium to have come across these women sitting at the entrance to public toilets beside a table just big enough to hold a saucer in which you will, if you are wise, place your 50 cents for a visit. In return, you can be assured that the toilets are clean and that there is paper on the roll. But it's not what you might consider a fulfilling job.

Recently, Tania Koniakin died. For 10 years she had been the *toiletjuffrouw* or *wc-madam*

in the Zuid shopping mall in Ghent. Her regular customers were so saddened by her death, they felt that they needed a way to express their grief. Now on her table, a candle burns beside a book of condolences but *de stoel in de hoek is leeg* – the chair in the corner is empty.

Since news spread of Tania's death, there has been a constant stream of people stopping at the entrance to the toilets. Hundreds have written their appreciation for Tania in the book and left money in her saucer to buy flowers for the family.

Tania was also popular with the shopkeepers around her. The florist would give her posies to brighten up the toilets; others brought air freshener and toilet paper. The manager of the nearby sandwich bar misses Tania enormously; in fact she hardly ever goes to the toilet now.

For the manager of the shopping centre, Tania *werkte met hart en ziel* – worked with heart and soul; she didn't have a job, but rather a vocation – een roeping ("calling"). The toilets are still open and are as clean as when Tania was alive, such is the respect shown to this woman. There are no plans to replace her for the moment; that would be *ongepast* – inappropriate.

### The last word → → →

#### Touched by relics

"The opening of the box was pretty emotional. You can't really get any closer to Damiaan than that, can you?"

Eyewitness on the discovery of a lock of hair and a foot bone belonging to Father Damiaan, uncovered in the archive of his religious order in Leuven

#### No laughing matter

"Please stop laughing at Kimberley. It's because of that that she's getting stupid thoughts in her head." Uncle of Kimberley Vlaeminck, the Flemish girl who had her face tattooed while she slept, on her thoughts of suicide

#### I'll be back

"I hope I can still go back to the police. I'm too young for early retirement."

Ghent police chief Peter De Wolf, before receiving a one-year suspended sentence for a hit-and-run, which ended his police career forever

#### Getting better

"The major Belgian banks are now in a convalescent phase, but the condition of the patient is still extremely delicate."

The National Bank report on the state of the banking sector, published last week