

**Summer smiles
on coast 7**

The Belgian coast has had a spectacular tourist year, with a wealth of sunny days and affordable holiday options for locals choosing not to go abroad during the financial crisis


Moving images 8

The fourth Biennial of the Moving Image in Mechelen is easily the city's best to date, with local and international artists providing vastly diverse installations on the theme of history's effect on the present (and the future)


**The art
of bread 11**

Himschoot bakery in Ghent still makes bread by hand in its basement and recently hired out-of-work pastry chefs from the famous Patisserie Bloch, which closed last year rather than automating production



Performance soup

Kaaitheater skirts the line between Brussels, Belgium and Europe

SHARON LIGHT



© Chris Van der Burgt

In many ways, Kaaitheater is as typically "Brussels" as you can get.

The performance arts centre walks the line between a Belgian and an international identity by welcoming an international roster of artists, while remaining deeply committed to home-grown talent. It is rooted to their neighbourhood, working to bolster the community of cultural organisations in the canal area. Its audience includes Dutch speakers, French speakers and members of the European community. This blending of different worlds is what Kaaitheater is all about.

The history goes back more than 30 years to 1977, when it functioned as an annual festival. It grew into a full-fledged theatre with an annual programme 10 years later. At that time, the company was housed in what is now the Kaaistudio's space but lacked its own performance hall. In 1993, the company moved into its current location at Sainctelette square on the Brussels canal, taking over the Luna Theater, now renamed the Kaaitheater. Kaa-

studio's has since been renovated as a second, more intimate performance space.

But through those years and those adjustments "the artistic mission has never changed," says artistic director Guy Gypens. This coming season is the second that Gypens has programmed for Kaaitheater, after a lengthy career as general manager of Rosas dance troupe, in addition to work with other Belgian companies.

"Our idea is to bring in who we think are the most interesting artists from abroad to create an international context for the local artists we support," Gypens explains.

→ *Continued on page 5*

One jab brings relief from liver ailment

Patients suffering from swollen livers as a result of cysts could find relief with a simple injection given once a month, researchers at the Catholic University of Leuven have found.

The team under Professor Frederik Nevens, who worked on the project together with the St Radboud hospital in Nijmegen in the Netherlands, estimates as many as 750 people in Flanders could be treated.

Liver cysts are hollow, fluid-filled sacs which cause the organ to swell to up to three times its normal size – about six kilos, or more

than 4.5 litres. Polycystic liver disease, where multiple cysts are present, usually goes together with polycystic kidney disease, but Flanders and the Netherlands form an exception. Because of a genetic mutation, the liver variant is much more common here than elsewhere. The condition has nothing to do with alcohol abuse.

Patients tend to be women in their 30s and 40s and, while the cysts do not affect liver function, the swelling affects other organs, leading to severe pain. Surgery to remove tissue is dangerous.

Now Dr Nevens and his team have

discovered that a single monthly injection of a hormone called somatostatin can reverse the growth of cysts. In tests, patients given the drug saw their livers shrink by 2.9% in six months, equivalent to about 350 millilitres.

Over a more extended time-frame, Dr Nevens said, the relief offered is substantial. "From my practice, I know that a difference of one litre brings a noticeable improvement in quality of life," he said.

The team's results will be published in next month's issue of the journal *Gastroenterology*.

GP shortage hits Limburg hardest

Doctors' union claims problem is "underestimated"

ALAN HOPE

One in four municipalities in Flanders is suffering a shortage of family doctors, with the situation worst in Limburg province, according to figures published last week by the medical insurance agency Riziv. Across Belgium, Limburg is beaten only by Luxembourg province, where there is a shortage in 90% of all communes. In the country as a whole, 166 of the total of 589 municipalities have too few doctors – one in three.

Riziv considers a "density" of fewer than 90 GPs per 100,000 residents to be a shortage. The agency drew up the list on behalf of the Impulso Fund, which pays a premium to doctors who set up a practice

in a poorly-served municipality. The fund, set up in 2006, offers a starting grant of up to €20,000 and interest-free loans of up to €15,000. It also provides funding for group practices to take on administrative staff to deal with paperwork and so leave doctors free for consultations.

Flanders is divided in two: Limburg and Antwerp are the second- and third-worst provinces in the country, while West and East Flanders are the best, with only 11 out of 129 communes affected.

The problem for Antwerp and Limburg appears to be that they

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FLANDERS TODAY

Independent Newsweekly



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FLANDERS TODAY
AUGUST 26, 2009

News in brief

Prosecutors in Dunkirk in Northern France are investigating the case of a five-year-old boy who drowned off the coast of De Panne last week. Magistrates in Veurne, which covers De Panne, have already closed the case. But their French counterparts want to know if the child was left unsupervised, playing with a rubber boat by the water's edge, for too long.

Two brothers who run a fruit farm in Bekkevoort in Flemish Brabant have been given authorisation to sell a brand-new apple. The Robijn (Ruby), according to Guido Robeyns, "shares its qualities with the stone: it is beautifully red and very hard. That has the advantage that it keeps longer." It also ripens about one month before other red apples, like the popular Jonagold.

The nine wooden elephants standing outside the Africa Museum in Tervuren are to get a makeover. Last week the biggest of the troop, the male, went off to have his rear legs reinforced with stainless steel tubes. The elephants are due to move to a new permanent home at Planckendael animal park in about May of next year.

The frigate *Marie-Louise* last week sailed from Zeebrugge to the Horn of Africa, where it will patrol for four months to protect shipping from pirates. The vessel and its 129-strong crew will patrol between the Gulf of Aden and the Seychelles, an area the size of the Mediterranean that is known for pirate activity. The whole operation, code-named Atalanta, involves 26 ships from nine countries.

Workers last week laid the last glass pane on the roof of the Plant Palace, a one-hectare greenhouse at the Botanical Gardens in Meise (see story, *Flanders Today*, last week). The Palace, a complex of 13 greenhouses, has been under renovation for 10 years. Work was slowed due to a dispute about which government authority should finance the work. In the end, the Flemish region paid 60% of the bill, and the federal government the rest.

Fears over the import of black widow spiders, apparently brought in by shipments of vintage American cars, have been greatly exaggerated, according to nature minister Joke Schauvliege. She was reacting to press reports that port authorities and medical professionals had been warned that the spider was increasingly making

Unique bridge destined for the scrapheap



Plans by the Flemish region and the city of Bruges to replace a unique swing-bridge designed by a world-famous Flemish engineer have been attacked by the Flemish Association for Industrial Archaeology (VVIA).

The bridge, which links the Scheepsdalelaan with the Blankenberge road and is known as the Scheepsdale Bridge, was designed by Arthur Vierendeel (1852-1940), who taught at the Catholic University of Leuven and developed the revolutionary structure which bears his name: the Vierendeel truss.

The Vierendeel truss differs from a standard truss in not having diagonal rigidifying braces, which gives the element a more aesthetically-pleasing look by allowing rounded corners. This aesthetic aspect was crucial to Vierendeel's philosophy. "For metallic constructions," he once wrote, "the dimensions have to be determined a priori by aesthetic considerations, whereas recourse to mathematical formulae only comes later."

The Scheepsdale Bridge may be the only remaining original Vierendeel bridge in existence, at least according to the Structurae engineering database, although structures using the principle that bears his name were built by his students.

The bridge is also interesting from an engineering point of view in that it swings laterally, rather than opening upwards. In addition, while most of Vierendeel's bridges were welded, this one is riveted, since rivets were another construction feature he thought should be used for decorative purposes.

"We had hoped the new bridge could be placed beside the old one, which could still be used by cyclists and pedestrians," said Adriaan Linters of the VVIA. "Unfortunately it seems as if nobody sees any worth in the bridge." The organisation is now asking for a distinctive section of the bridge to be set up somewhere as a monument. But this seems unlikely. "Aside from the cost, there is no suitable place in the vicinity to show such a monument," said Bruges' alderman for public works, Jean-Pierre Van den Berghe.

► www.vvia.be

its home in Flanders. "There is no reason to panic," said a ministerial statement.

Convicted terrorist Nizar Trabelsi has started a hunger strike in Bruges prison in protest at the imposition of a stricter regime. Trabelsi was discovered in possession of knives in Lantin prison and transferred to the high-security wing at Bruges. He is serving 10 years for planning a terrorist attack against the US air base at Kleine Brogel, and faces extradition to the US when he is released to face charges there.

Traffic police last year handed out 540,947 speeding tickets, 4.2% more than in 2007 and an absolute

record. The real number of speeding motorists is even higher, as the figure ignores tickets given out by local police. The 2009 figure is expected to be higher still, with 110,000 tickets generated by speed cameras in the first seven months, and 60 new cameras ready to be installed, 40 of them in Flanders.

SMS messages ought to cost no more than six cents to bring Belgian tariffs into line with other countries. In a wide-ranging survey of 1,500 mobile phone tariff plans across Europe, Belgium was found to be cheapest in no cases at all, and often the most expensive by a factor of three or four. But enterprise minister Vincent Van Quickenborne said a maximum price was not allowed under EU rules.



GPs' union calls for end to export of doctors

Continued from page 1

are border provinces, according to the medical profession's house magazine *De Artsenkraant*, which published the list. Doctors from those provinces are attracted across the border into the Netherlands, where the working hours are better, with less or no evening and weekend work. Medical practices in the Netherlands routinely advertise in the two Belgian provinces for doctors. The provinces of East and West Flanders, which border the more sparsely-populated Zeeuws-Vlaanderen province, are not affected by this problem.

The situation may in fact be more serious, according to the Syndicate of Flemish General Practitioners (SVH). The Riziv report assumes that there are about 18,000 family doctors in Belgium, said SVH vice-president Ruffy Baeke, but that figure is based on an estimated 1,250 consultations a year. In reality, a full-time GP is likely to carry out 2,500 consultations, which means Belgium only has 8,000-9,000 GPs, with fewer

than 5,000 of them in Flanders, he said.

"It's unbelievable that the government doesn't know how many doctors there are in the country," Baeke said. The SVH has now asked the new health minister for Flanders, Jo Vandeurzen, to draw up a list for Flanders alone, something they claim could be done in a month. They also want measures to make the job more attractive, such as an extension of the Impulseo system to cover all doctors, both to stem the flow of qualified GPs over the border, and to encourage medical students to choose general practice over other specialities. Fewer than 20% of students who enter medical studies opt for general practice.

"The population and the country's GPs are getting older fast," Baeke said. "If something isn't done quickly to make the job more attractive, we'll end up with a situation like in America, where doctors no longer make house calls, and patients have to travel 40 to 50 kilometres to see a doctor." ♦



The average family doctor in Belgium does 2,500 consultations a year

© Reporters

THE WEEK IN FIGURES

5,000

water bags handed out by Hasselt fire service at Pukkelpop festival last week to help combat the extreme heat of over 36 degrees in places. The last time the thermometer topped 36 degrees in Belgium was in 2006

67

extra trains laid on by Belgian railways to cope with additional traffic to and from the coast. Normally in the summer there are 63 additional trains

28 x 3

the heat plan was triggered in Brussels on 20 August after the temperature rose to 28 degrees for the third day in a row. As part of the plan, young people visit the elderly and vulnerable to check they have enough water, adequate ventilation, and so on.

180µg/l

ozone levels in the air last week were expected to reach as high as the EU alert level of 180 micrograms per litre. People are advised not to make strenuous effort in the open air at peak times

2,906,603

internet connections in Belgium in the second quarter, a rise of 1.05%

97.25%

Internet connections at home using broadband, while dial-up fell by 17% on the residential market

9,778

dial-up connections used by businesses nationwide, while 97.19% of connections are broadband

19 minutes

time that someone on an average wage in Brussels has to work to be able to afford a Big Mac. Workers in Tokyo, Toronto and Chicago only have to work 12 minutes, whereas Brussels is on a par with Berlin and Amsterdam

13,000 to 17,800

new jobs in the restaurant sector as a result of the cutting of VAT taxes. The number of "black" jobs should drop by up to 7%



Hospitals write off millions every year in unpaid bills

Hospitals in Flanders write off a total of about €5.2 million a year in bills unpaid by patients who cannot afford them, according to a survey by Zorgnet Vlaanderen (ZV), the organisation that represents about 500 Christian healthcare providers in the region. The sum represents an average of €170,000 per hospital per year.

"Many hospitals accept it as a fact of life that patients in a difficult social situation cannot pay their bill. For people with health problems, and then financial problems on top of that, we look for a humane solution. And if payment is really not possible, then the hospital has no other option than

to write the debt off," a spokesman for ZV said.

Hospitals have a range of different solutions to the problem:

- provision of a social service in each hospital for questions over payments
- time to pay off a bill
- a "solidarity fund" through which money raised from gifts or fundraising events helps to alleviate some bills
- discretionary power not to bill for certain supplements, room rent or equipment
- allowing patients to only pay the co-pay portion of the bill and

invoice the insurance company for the rest

Zorgnet stressed that the facilities are in place for people who are unable to pay their hospital bills, but that other defaulters would still be subject to the normal procedures for debt recovery, including the intervention of bailiffs. The organisation called on the government to take measures to help out by, for instance, allowing the newest techniques and medications to be reimbursed faster. New and costly treatments, which are not yet reimbursed by insurance funds, can leave many people facing large bills. ♦

Baroque painting found in Lier

A previously unknown Madonna and Child by the Spanish Baroque artist Bartolomé Esteban Murillo has been discovered in the stores of the City Museum of Lier in Antwerp province. The painting dates from around 1650.

"This discovery is a first for Belgium," said a spokesman for the Royal Institute for Artistic Heritage in Brussels. "The piece was for a long time hidden away in the stores, but is now fully restored to its original state."

Neither the institute nor the museum would say, however, what the exact circumstances of the find were. That will be revealed, together with further details about

the work, when the painting is put on display on 1 September.

Murillo (1618-1682) was born in Seville, the youngest of 14 children, and became known for his religious paintings, which belong to the baroque tradition, while his more secular portrayals of ordinary people tend more towards the realism that was to come along much later.

He produced numerous other paintings of the Virgin, some of which hang in the Pitti Palace in Florence, the Metropolitan Museum in New York and the Hermitage in St Petersburg. The Madonna shown here is in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. ♦



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Performance soup

Reaching out to the capital's foreigners has set Kaaitheteer apart

→ *Continued from page 1*

What has changed is the nature of that support. Kaaitheteer has various in-house artists, who use the office, rehearsal or performance space. But the company now limits itself to the co-production of performances, rather than mounting full productions themselves. Their collaborations with artists continue, sometimes lasting for years or even decades. This stretches Kaaitheteer in several directions at once – developing long-standing relationships, while remaining wary about allowing certain artists to dominate the programme. There is a constant drive to bring in new blood along with the familiar faces, “balancing continuity with innovation,” as Gypens puts it.

Thus, an equally important part of Kaaitheteer’s programme is international work. Artists from across Europe are invited to perform, and there is a long-standing link with American companies as well.

Knowing your neighbours

The theatre has also become intensely involved at the most local level. In the kilometre between Kaaitheteer and Kaaistudio’s, there is an interesting dynamic of the Brussels canal area. The Kaaitheteer management recognises the challenges of the Molenbeek neighbourhood, while noting that the way that area develops is bound to be important to the city as a whole.

Already thinking ahead, Kaaitheteer is devel-

“Brussels has hesitated for too long in trying to accommodate European communities”

oping work in public spaces to take place in September 2010, involving as many cultural partners as possible from the canal area. “An institution should not just look at what artists are doing; it’s important to play a role in civil society,” notes Gypens.

This commitment to having a voice in the community is also instrumental in Kaaitheteer’s programming. While individual productions may make a political, cultural, or societal statement, the annual cycle has grown to include a series of festivals, some with political agendas and international reach.

The first this year is the second edition of the Spoken World festival in October, which takes on a theme, giving artists a chance to come together over a current hot topic. Last year’s festival was built around the 2008 Interdependence Forum that took place in Brussels.

This year, Spoken World includes 10 productions from around the world, responding to “1989”, a significant year in different countries for a variety of reasons: the fall of the Berlin Wall, the beginning of the end of apartheid being two. Now 20 years in the past, Kaaitheteer is bringing together a set of artists to explore the diversity of change in that year, and the way our world has developed as a result.

On a smaller scale, Kaaitheteer also takes on climate change through the second incar-

nation of the Burning Ice festival. Preceding the United Nations climate conference in Copenhagen by a week, the festival includes artists as well as experts from other disciplines (philosophers, politicians) for an exploration of the impact of climate change through (and on) the arts.

Burning Ice #2 highlights two performances: *Holland Tsunami: Drowning in Europe* imagines that the Netherlands has sunk under rising sea levels and the Dutch have been evacuated to Hungary as climate refugees. *Evacuated Landscapes* creates artificial landscapes, some of which look familiar, others not so much. These performances are complimented with debates and talks on a range of subjects, which are in one way or another linked to the Copenhagen conference.

The melting pot

This international influence in a mixture of performance and cultural information sets Kaaitheteer apart from other Belgian theatres. Yet it remains highly aware of its Brussels identity.

A substantial portion of the programming includes Flemish artists, but “being in Brussels, you have multiple identities; you are Flemish and Bruxellois,” says Gypens. “We don’t limit ourselves to the Flemish audience, but it’s an important part of our programme.”

Their links to the Dutch-speaking community are, however, noticeably strong: in the coming weeks, they serve as the host of

Het Theaterfestival, a collection of the most important Dutch-language theatre productions of the past year. (See story, page 9)

The variety of programming in Brussels allows Kaaitheteer to specialise in the performing arts. Their programming is almost evenly split between theatre and dance (and often a fusion of the two), leaving music programming, for example, to other Brussels institutions such as the Bozar.

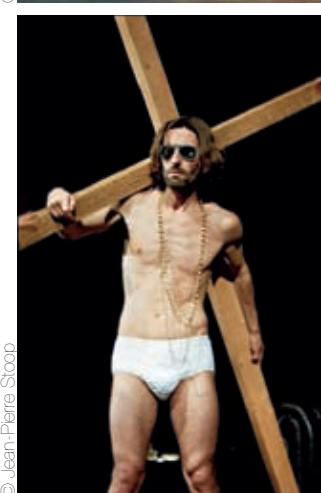
The mixture of disciplines and the international line-up in their season also affords Kaaitheteer a broad reach in terms of its audience. French speakers make up nearly a quarter of their yearly audience, which they see as crucial to their role as a Brussels theatre.

Kaaitheteer has also crossed over into the European communities, attracting a substantial international crowd, particularly to their dance and English-language performances. “When I started working in Brussels, the European communities were something separate,” Gypens recalls. “You can see real change in how they now integrate into the city. Brussels has hesitated for too long in trying to accommodate them; we have made a real effort to find a way into that community.” ♦

→ www.kaaitheater.be

Today's Flemish Masters at Kaaitheteer this autumn

Kaaitheteer has scheduled an onslaught of work by some of the biggest names in the Flemish arts scene. Many have worked with Kaaitheteer quite closely, and several are actually co-produced by the theatre. Anyone looking for a crash course in the Flemish performing arts of today, here’s your chance.



Rosas / The Song

• 17-27 September •

The season opens with a new piece from Anna Teresa De Keersmaeker’s company, Rosas. The Brussels-based company has a long-standing history of collaboration with Kaaitheteer – they are already booked for another show later in the season (*Zeitung*). This Belgian premiere is part of the Matinee Kadee series, so you can drop your kids off for a free workshop while you catch the show.

Damaged Goods / Do Animals Cry

• 22-24 October •

Belgian premiere number two, this one from American choreographer **Meg Stuart**, whose dance company Damaged Goods is based in Brussels. Stuart is in residence at Kaaitheteer, and they co-produced this show, which combines dance and theatre (in English) in a story (of sorts) about a family (of sorts) tries to reunite and communicate. Stuart returns to the Kaaitheteer stage in April with *Blessed* (photo, cover).

Troubleyn / Orgy of Tolerance

• 9-10 December •

Another English-language production, *Orgy of Tolerance* is quintessential Flemish artist **Jan Fabre**’s exploration of the eroticism of consumerism. Strange, disturbing and fascinating by turns, it stars members of his performance troupe Troubleyn.

Jan Decorte / Bakchai

• 7-9 January •

Long-time Flemish actor and director Jan Decorte (pictured) staged *Wintervögelchen*, a re-telling of Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale*, last season at Kaaitheteer, and it returns this month as a Het Theaterfestival selection. *Bakchai* is Decorte’s next show, a Kaaitheteer co-production based on *The Bacchae*.

Les ballets C de la B / Out of Context

• 13-17 January •

The last of the upcoming premieres from the big names of Flanders, this dance production features company founder **Alain Platel**, along with eight other dancers, in an exploration of the body in a state of ecstasy (or possibly hysteria).

Channel surfing

The big Flemish TV channels release their autumn line-ups

ALAN HOPE

In the world of television, there are two seasons: autumn and spring. In summer, as you may have noticed, there's not a bleedin' thing on. And nobody seems to even acknowledge the existence of winter: too much of a downer, perhaps.

In the last couple of weeks, the Flemish channels have announced their autumn schedules. For the VRT, the public-sector leader, it's a matter of justifying the subsidy on which they operate. For VTM, the second front-runner, it's a matter of consolidating a virtually unsailable position.

For VT4, who now place themselves as "challenger" (in recognition that the Big Two have the market carved up), it's a matter of staying on the radar – by cannibalising the internet, old Clive James shows, and America's Unfunniest Clips of Babies Hurting Themselves.

And what can we expect this season? Read on.

VRT

The VRT has some blue-chip programmes that are rarely watched by foreigners: early evening quiz *Blokken* is in some ways the biggest show on TV, as other channels have to beat the effect it has on people's viewing. Among the others: *De Pappenheimers* (quiz), *Witse* (crime series), *Thuis* (soap), *FC De Kampioenen* (comedy). They're all back, together with *Los zand* (Loose

Sand), a home-made drama in which three Flemish couples go to Africa.

Los zand falls into the category already occupied by series like *Van vlees en bloed*, *De smaak van De Keyser* and *Katarakt*: essentially extended movies, in line with the trend in American TV to create series that belong in the canon of "moving-image literature", like, say, *The Sopranos* and *The Wire*.

The VRT is not immune to the temptation of the archive, with a show called *De jaren stillekes* (*The Quiet Years*), where Steven Van Herreweghe invites a guest to choose the best TV moments from across the world. Everything stands or falls on the guest, otherwise it's a clip show like any other.

VTM

VTM discovered with *Sara* the power of the tele-novella, a series that combines the attractive power of a soap and the finite nature of a story-arc. They followed *Sara* with *LouisLouise*. Now it's the turn of *David*, about a well-to-do family who finds a castaway on a desert island and brings him back home to Flanders.

Otherwise, VTM will dominate the airwaves with an on-screen search for a replacement for Katrien from singing group K3. The channel's other big show will be *So You Think You Can Dance?*, which will take some famous Flemings and try to humiliate them



Matthias Schoenaerts and Lotte Pinoy star in the big autumn drama *Los zand*

for the enjoyment of the viewing public, unless they're able to dance, as some people reportedly can.

VT4

VT4 and its cousin VijfTV took the most trouble to publicise their autumn season, with live performances at Brussels' Ancienne Belgique from Air Traffic and A-Ha, to entertain press, advertisers and various other guests.

All that trouble to fulfil the proverb about empty vessels: the VT4 season is definitely lacklustre.

The main attractions are a new series of ratings success *The Block*, in which four couples compete to renovate lofts, this year in Ghent. Unlike in previous years, the competitors are given no budget, which not only makes the game harder, but is symptomatic of parent company SBS, who have brought in new CEO Thierry Tacheny to cut costs and improve margins in times of depleted revenue.

The other new arrival is *Hole in the Wall*, presented by Roos Van Acker, which is a straight rip-off of the Japanese game of human Tetris, a smash on YouTube. Van Acker told *Flanders Today* that the game is *onnozel* – a Flemish word

somewhere between "silly" and "idiotic". "But great fun," she adds. Teams of famous Flemings take part, but they might as well be anyone because the game is hilarious whoever is playing it.

It's not exactly ground-breaking TV, and nor is *De 40*, which is recycled TV at its most shameless: each week it screens the 40 Most Something clips; 40 funniest YouTube videos, 40 worst auditions, 40 bloopers, 40 wedding videos and on and on.

The TV viewer is by now aware of buzzwords and isn't fooled: Monday is "true stories," which is code for American Movie-of-the-Week style fare; Friday is Movie Classics, in which they try to make a virtue out of the necessity of running old warhorses like *Platoon*, *Top Gun* and *Terminator*, which even Arnold must by now be sick of watching.

On the plus side, there are new episodes of series like season five of *Lost* (which started on 24 August), *CSI NY*, *Las Vegas*, *NCIS LA* and *Flashpoint*.

Over on VijfTV, they've had to put up with losing *Komen eten* to the main channel, but they still have *ER* and *Grey's Anatomy* every day, reality shows like *My Super-sweet Sixteen* and series like *The L Word* and *Private Practice*, both

of which are aimed at the female target audience, and at men who like foxy ladies.

Vitaya

We wrote last week about Vitaya's 10th anniversary, without realising the runt of the litter would pull out the biggest coup of the whole autumn season, with a total re-run from season one of *Desperate Housewives*.

"I'm very happy with the arrival of a top international series like *Desperate Housewives* on Vitaya," says Yvette Mignolet, CEO of Media ad Infinitum, the company that runs Vitaya. "This successful series is strategically very important for us and will reinforce Vitaya's profile as a channel with the feminine touch." You can say that again.

They'll also be showing *The Chopping Block*, the ill-fated NBC show featuring Marco Pierre White and eight couples battling to win their own restaurant. NBC cancelled the show while it was still running and put the last episodes on YouTube. Obviously, it's a little unexciting, unless you happen to be as big a fan of White as your correspondent. This is the man who taught Gordon Ramsay everything he knows, except how to be charismatic. ♦



Teams take part in a game of human Tetris in *Hole in the Wall*



Marco Pierre White in restaurant race *The Chopping Block*

Decision on Opel postponed

Last week's deadline for a decision on the future of Opel production in Antwerp and in Europe came and went, and still no decision was taken by General Motors. German chancellor Angela Merkel was reported to be losing patience with the American parent company, and as *Flanders Today* went to press, she was calling for a decision this week.

The decision concerns the two takeover bids that remain on the table: one from the Austrian-Canadian parts manufacturer Magna, and one from the Brussels-based investment fund

RHJ International. Magna is generally considered the favourite, and it is their bid that has the support of Merkel, thanks to guarantees given for jobs in Germany.

According to reports, not only can GM not decide between the two bidders, it may even be considering holding onto Opel Europe after all. Just where that would leave Opel Antwerp is not clear, though it is a fairly safe bet that cuts would be made. However, the two bidders offer little hope for a bright future for Opel Antwerp. ♦



© Reporters

Car production at one of Opel's German plants

Flanders importing French-speaking workers

They're the new migrant workers: French-speaking residents of Brussels and Wallonia, some 2,500 of them, who in the last year have found a job in Flanders via the official employment agency VDAB.

The figure is a result of a cooperative effort among the regions to use unfilled job vacancies in Flanders to take the pressure off of unemployment rates in the other two regions. "The result is good but could be better," said Fons Leroy, VDAB's director. "Above all, it's not been shown that we can change things."

While the figure is lower than may have been hoped, it was pointed out that it is better than it used to be, when mobility across the language border was virtually zero. In any case, taking account

of jobs found outside of the official agency, the real total is likely to be higher.

The effort has been going on since 2005, firstly to make vacancies known, and later to offer assistance in making the necessary arrangements. In 2007, the VDAB advertised 62,000 jobs with the Walloon equivalent Forem, and 65,000 with the Brussels agency Actiris. Other efforts have included "job dating" sessions and language courses. Given those figures, the actual number of jobs taken up does seem small: about one in 20 vacancies are filled (many of the jobs are advertised in both Brussels and Wallonia).

Brussels provided 2,043 of the new workers and 435 training interns. Wallonia accounted for 816 jobs and 188 interns.

Credit flows to businesses, but problems remain

The four main banks in Belgium – ING, KBC, BNP Paribas Fortis and Dexia – have begun to lend more money to business clients, the National Bank reports. In the second three months of the year, the banks loaned €1.7 billion, following a cut in lending in the first quarter of €492 million. The total sum of outstanding debt of all businesses in the country stood at end-June at €110 billion.

The policy change comes as good news to businesses and to the economy in general. One of the main criticisms from business since the beginning of the financial crisis has been banks' unwillingness to extend invest-

ment credit to companies, effectively choking them of funds and preventing them from expanding their way out of difficulties.

Banks also tightened up the conditions under which they were prepared to lend, another trend which is now in reverse. But the situation is still unsatisfactory for business leaders, who find charges over and above interest too high, and the conditions required too tough. The National Bank agrees: "In spite of a slight improvement in the first half of the year, conditions are on the whole less favourable and much more negative than at the time of the last credit crunch in 2002," the bank's report says.

Small businesses accounted for most of the increase, with medium-sized and larger companies remaining steady. In part, that is due to the larger enterprises' easier access to other sources of credit, the bank said. ♦



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Sun shines on tourism at coast

As the end of the school holidays approaches, the tourist industry at the Flemish coast was looking back on a spectacular season. Figures for August are not yet available, but Westtoer, the West Flanders tourist organisation, forecast that it would be better than July – and July was a great month, better than 2008.

As tour operators working with more distant destinations were feeling the pinch of the economic crisis, the Flemish coast reaped some of the benefits. Hardest hit were flight packages, which suffered from the first drop in reservations for years. This led to an upturn in visits to the coast, either for a full holiday or day-trips.

The situation was made a great deal easier by the fine weather, even though the tourism sector had started the month of August with complaints that the VRT was issuing "wrong" weather forecasts which – because they did not take account of the coast's particular micro-climate – discouraged potential visitors. Two trends stand out. In the

first place, people were delaying booking holidays, perhaps to take advantage of last-minute deals, or possibly to react to weather forecasts. In the second place, there was a marked move away from longer-stay visits towards day-trips. In good times, about 350,000 people stay at the coast, along with as many as 250,000 day-trippers.

The crisis doesn't seem to have had an effect on spending, Westtoer says. The conventional wisdom is that people are more careful, "but I'm not so sure about that," said Magda Monballoy of Westtoer. "It could even be that day-trippers spend more".

The situation was not so good this year at the coast for student vacation workers, according to the ACV trade union. The union's special unit received more serious complaints this year about abuse of employment rules. The main complaint involved working illegally to supplement the legal contract of 23 days, and working additional hours at the same time – sometimes without pay. ♦



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THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Consultancy • Accenture

Jo Deblaere has been named chief operating officer of Accenture. Deblaere replaces Stephen Rohleder, who goes on to be CEO of the newly-created Health and Public Services subsidiary.

Credit rating • Moody's

International rating bureau Moody's has prolonged the AAA rating given to the Flemish government, on the condition it keeps its promise to deliver a balanced budget by 2011. "This shows that [Moody's] has faith in the financial decisiveness of the new Flemish government," commented incoming budget minister Philippe Muyters.

Publishing • Sanoma

Magazine publisher Sanoma is reported to be in talks with TV production house Woestijnvis over a joint venture surrounding the weekly magazine *Humo*, currently owned by Sanoma. Concrete plans are not yet on the table, Sanoma CEO Aimé Van Hecke said. Woestijnvis, meanwhile, denied rumours that the magazine would be taken over by Corelio (publishers of *De Standaard* and *Flanders Today*), which owns 40% of Woestijnvis.

Retail • Ikea

Four out of five Belgians will receive the new Ikea catalogue, to be distributed from 4 September. Worldwide, 198 million copies are printed in 54 editions in 28 languages. The Belgian editions, with a print-run of 3.7 million, will be printed in Charleroi.

School supplies • Clips

The new trend in schoolbags is no longer rucksacks but messenger bags, according to Clips, which ships office and school supplies from Asse and Aalst. Favourite brand is Friis & Company, and favourite colour is purple. Eastpak CEO Gilles Laumonier said the bags now make up 25% of the company's sales, having tripled over the last three years.

Services • Proxyclick

Companies who pay for a licence for the use of Proxyclick by their employees will in future be able to deduct the cost for tax purposes, after an agreement with the finance ministry. Proxyclick allows visitors to order meals online from a selection of partner caterers. The meals will also be payable with meal cheques, the ministry said.

Imagining history

Mechelen's fourth biennial of the moving image is its best one ever

Lisa Bradshaw

It's impossible to know where you're heading if you don't know where you came from," says Katerina Gregos. This was the starting point from which she formulated the theme for this year's Contour festival in Mechelen: *Hidden in Remembrance is the Silent Memory of Our Future*.

Gregos, formerly the artistic director of the Argos Centre for Art and Media in Brussels, hand-picked some of the most famous video artists working today for Mechelen's bi-annual event. Though I say "video" at my peril. The first thing Gregos did when she was asked to curate Contour 2009 was remove the moniker "video art". Now it's called a Biennial of Moving Image.

"Video is VHS, like a documentation tool more than an art form," she explains. "Moving image encompasses old analogue forms, like 16 mm, to high definition and digital."

You will indeed find as many methods as narratives in this fourth edition of a biennial that has this year taken a noticeable

leap in quality and design. Add to this the creative spaces chosen to house each installation, and you have one of the most unusual, enjoyable art treks ever staged in Flanders.

Presenting art in offbeat venues is nothing new (especially for Belgium). But this meticulously curated and architecturally arranged programme uses Mechelen's specific historical role as the former capital of the Low Countries and the seat of the Archbishop as an integral part of the show. The city is known for having more than 300 listed monuments and three UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and Contour puts them to good use. From a former Franciscan monastery to a 19th-century school to a convent-turned-brewery-turned-textile outlet, discovering history according to international moving-image artists is – incredibly effectively – also discovering the history of the city of Mechelen.

Forever present

"We live in a culture of presentism," Gregos contends. "We believe, mistakenly, that the past



© Lisa Bradshaw

has nothing to teach us because we are moving full speed ahead with this idea that the future will always be better than the past. I find this extremely problematic – to think of the past, present and future as being disconnected from each other, when in fact they are a complex continuum."

This assertion is reflected in many of Contour's 18 installations on a walking circuit of 12 venues, but perhaps most urgently by Finnish artist Eija-Liisa Ahtila's "Where is Where?", one of two installations that clock in at an hour. You are rewarded for sticking it out.

Ahtila's work is based on a real event from the 1950s in which two young Algerian boys killed their French friend as revenge for the hundreds of thousands of Algerian deaths that went unpunished during French colonisation. Seen through the eyes of a present-day European woman, time goes back and forth and viewpoints shift. By the end, you find yourself disturbingly able to understand the boys' justification for the death of an innocent, as well as struggling with many of the accusations and questions in the dialogue (such as: "When you die, where are you, and where is where?").

Ahtila's work is also one of the most effective in terms of tech-

nique: four large screens on four walls show different scenes. What you choose to watch shows your own preference for narrative: do you watch the screen that shows the character or do you choose to see what the character is seeing?

Colonialism (and related interventions) are in fact a big topic at Contour: Pakistani artist Maryam Jafri's single large-scale screen is perfectly positioned facing away from the entrance to a huge room in the Art Nouveau wing of the 19th-century Schepper Institute. Like some other installations, it requires a bit of inquisitive assertion on the part of the visitor to find it. Like Ahtila, this much-shorter piece explores colonialism's effect on the present day – as nightmarish consequences for the invaded turn around to infect the perpetrator.

In the same building on an upper floor is "Vita Nova" by Belgian artist Vincent Meessen – a record of the artist's trip to Burkina Faso to find the saluting child soldier featured on a cover of *Paris Match* in 1955. Weaving together historical facts with fictional interpretations, it questions the use of propaganda as a tool to write a preferred version of history. As your eyes adjust to the dark of the room, you suddenly find yourself surrounded by glass cases filled with stuffed animals from Africa. (It's simply part of the school's property but, in this case, rather eerie indeed.)

Contour is this year arranged so that all the venues holding the work of the artists are within an area of about one square kilometre. You receive a walking map

with numbered venues; follow the suggested order or pick and choose the pieces you want to see. However you choose to experience it, you'll never have to walk more than 10 minutes between any two venues.

The largesse of installations is not necessarily an indication of their impact. I found myself, for instance, not being able to bear more than 15 minutes of UK artist Nathaniel Mellors' hour-long "The Time Surgeon", despite its gorgeous multi-level screening technique, but was riveted by Belgian Herman Asselberghs' "Black Box". In a small room so dark an assistant has to guide you in with a flashlight, you're confronted by a small screen of blurred, dark images of protesting crowds and quiet whispering – one phrase, over and over: "Historical moments only assume a meaning once they're over." And then, finally, much louder: "It all depends on what happens next." ♦

Contour is open from Thursday to Sunday from 13.00 to 20.00, and you could get through all 12 stops in one long day. Your entry armband, however, is valid for the entire run of the event. All written information, including subtitles, is available in English.



Yorgos Sapountzis projects his confrontations with Mechelen's monuments on cloth banners (top, right); boys take revenge on the injustice to their country in "Where is Where?" (above left); American artist Matthew Buckingham tells the story of one of the world's first self portraits (left)

Until 18 October

Tickets and starting point:
Mechelen Culture Centre
Minderbroedersgang 5

► www.contour2009.be

State of the art

The only festival in Flanders that shines a light on the condition of contemporary theatre

Don't call it a "best of." Het Theaterfestival director Don Verboven must hear it often because he warns me of what it's not before he tells me what it is.

What it *is* is a "state of the arts" in Flanders and the Netherlands. But how the festival determines the qualifying programme is a complex – and quite fascinating – logistical arrangement.

To begin, the three jury members for the following year are announced during the festival. These jurists are on call throughout the coming year to see more than 100 performances each that were produced in Flanders or the Netherlands. Each juror is assigned certain productions, but the festival also maintains an alarm system. When one jurist sees a potentially qualifying production, the other two are alerted and do their best to see the show.

Jurists meet monthly for discussions with Verboven, who also sees many of the productions (but has no vote on the jury). Come May, the choice is made. The jurists are not seeking a certain number of productions; rather, they are selecting those performances that made an impact, that reflect the state of artistic life in the Flemish/Dutch region. "The spoken language is not a factor in the jury's choice. What's important is the quality of the performance," Verboven explains. So, although most of the productions are, of course, in Dutch, you'll usually find one or two in English.

This year's selection includes 14 productions.

Most years feature 10 or 11 but, hypothetically, the festival could choose to include just three if those were the only ones they felt qualified.

Once the choice is made, Verboven and his team of two take over to organise a festival that includes all of the selections. This is not always possible – last year a particular production required such an unusual setting that they could not accommodate it. But it still qualified as a festival choice and was printed in the festival programme, albeit with a note that it could not be presented. Shows are usually staged at least twice and often more, unless budget or scheduling restraints make that impossible.

During the run-up to the festival, the jury develops texts that explain their choices – including what they did not choose. "This year's jury was really searching for a kind of authenticity," says Verboven, "artists who are struggling with 'who am I as an artist? What's the relevance of my making theatre; why do I invite an audience?'"

The festival has been around nearly two decades, travelling back and forth between Brussels' Kaaitheater and Antwerp's deSingel. This year it's in Brussels and kicks off on 27 August with a "State of the Union", which gives a selected artist the chance to talk about the current condition of the arts in the region and in the world. Given the background of Sheffield-based actor, artistic director and playwright Tim Etchells, we can likely expect a more international perspective this time around.

SHARON LIGHT



© Kurt Van der Elst

One of Flanders' most popular plays of the year, *The Broken Circle Breakdown* makes the cut

It is an intense two weeks of non-stop productions, not to mention the extensive "parallel programme" featuring lectures, discussions, workshops, a festival radio station and a daily newsletter. The whole thing wraps up with an opportunity for audience members to discuss the jury's selections with the jurists.

De Keuze '09 (The Choice '09), as they call the programme, is definitely a diverse mix. Well-known Flemish playwrights and companies like Jan Decorte and Abattoir Fermé make appearances, as well as three productions that were also chosen by the festival's Dutch counterpart, the Nederlands Theater Festival, which runs next month in Amsterdam. These include *Brandhout: Een irritant* by Antwerp company tg STAN, who nail the delivery of the sardonic monologues from Austrian author Thomas Bernhard's book (know in English as *Woodcutters*) about the pretentiousness of the theatre.

The other two that made the cut in both festivals are *Amateurs*, a vehicle for two actors from Dutch theatre group Nieuw West about the cost of chasing your dreams, based on Krzysztof Kieslowski's film *Camera Buff*, and *The Broken*

Circle Breakdown, a wildly popular music/theatre fusion from Ghent-based company Compagnie Cecilia. (It's already sold out.)

You'll notice that some selections this year aren't even performances: Flemish artist Benjamin Verdonck will present some of his installations from his ongoing art project *Kalender*, while the photographs of *18 Maart – Muntplein* recognises the significance of a demonstration by *sans papiers* singing the Belgian national anthem six months ago. The jury felt that the theatricality and political weight of that event warranted participation in the festival.

The festival does not seek out any particular themes, but Verboven sees some general trends emerging through the years. In earlier incarnations, artists were "looking at language – how do you communicate on stage. Now, some artists are thinking less about aesthetics and more about how their work is related to the rest of the world."

"Best of" or not, who could resist? ♦

► www.theaterfestival.be

STÉPHANIE DUVAL



fashionista

Knokke

It's the place where Belgium's rich and semi-famous go to pretend they're in Saint-Tropez. It's the only municipality in our country where not one but several extravagant luxury fairs are organised, be it in beautiful tents on the beach or in the casino (which is more old than grand).

But on the second weekend of August, we were headed towards the chicest neighbourhood in Knokke affectionately called Le Zoute. (French is somehow deemed more appropriate here than the broad West-Flemish dialect of the locals.)

The Kustlaan carefully winds its way around boutiques, jewellery stores and antiquarians. Every day tourists and regulars stroll by, shopping bags in hand, credit cards burning holes in the pockets of their new designer jeans.

Except when the weather is too beautiful to justify not lying on the beach, every day is a perfect day for shopping.

This was especially the case on 7 August, when the neighbourhood celebrated the annual Night of Le Zoute. On the Place Albert, a big white tent was the decor for the show organised by boutique Marie-Claire. Models and celebrities strutted down the runway in the latest fur and fashion, inspiring ladies in the audience for their autumn collection shopping.

Everywhere boutiques decorated stalls on the streets where they could treat their most loyal customers to champagne. Unfortunate passers-by without an invitation turned to other boutiques that had a more inclusive idea for the night. Olivier Strelle's new shop welcomed everyone

inside, and Delvaux organised a workshop for the little ones, who created funny little objects in the brand's signature leather.

When no famous people were in view, the swarms of photographers turned their attention to the best dressed and the most confident. Anonymous visitors were kindly asked to pose for a picture, which would appear in the next-day edition of the magazine *Zoute People*. That way, the fun of people spotting could continue on through the weekend: what was she wearing, who was he with?

Perhaps the Night of Le Zoute is less about fashion than about its fans: the people who are obsessed by it, spend money on it and want to be seen in it. But heck, you won't find a fashion week more fun than this!

Wearing history

Brussels or Antwerp. Toe to toe, or boot to boot; how do these two heavyweight cities compare when it comes to second-hand shopping?

COURTNEY DAVIS

I was on a mission; find a vintage wedding dress. With no set ideas in mind save it being a full length gown of any era, material or colour, I set off on day trips to two cities with a list of shops in hand: Brussels, international capital extraordinaire, and Antwerp: Fashion capital chic.

Not only did I find my dress, I found a gold mine of fashion inspiration. Make sure to allow for plenty of time for a vintage trip, as part of the pleasure is exploring all the racks.



ANTWERP

For a place known for fashion, vintage is no exception.

Belchique In the lovely antique-laden area of 't Zuid, you will this gem of a store tucked down a cobblestone street. With big name brands like Chanel and Prada, you can walk away with a stylish outfit without breaking the bank. Mostly female clothing and tending towards modern and second-hand pieces as opposed to vintage. Kloosterstraat 177

→ www.belchique.com



Sussies Really – this is what thrift store shopping is about. Piles and piles of fabulous, funky outfits, plus dresses galore. I tried on 15. This is the kind of shop that has that recognisable musty smell, and all the clothes have a history. My boyfriend was equally happy, putting about in the spacious men's section. Oude Koormarkt 69

→ www.sussies.be

Jutka & Riska Something old, something new applies here. Being close to the fashion museum has rubbed off on this shop, which is a successful combination of both new, edgy pieces and vintage. Girl-only wear, this place also has some one-of-a-kind accessories. Although the vintage clothing section in the back is a bit spare, the racks of stylish pieces up front more than balance it out. Nationalestraat 87

Labels Inc The biggest names of fashion at much smaller prices – although certainly not bargain basement. Nearby high-end shops give their leftover stocks and samples. Be it second hand or second season, the small shop is a way for even a student to sport some Dries Van Noten, especially with its focus on Belgian designers. Aalmoezenierstraat 4

→ www.labelsinc.be

Episode While located in a number of spots (London, Paris, Amsterdam), the branches in Antwerp and Brussels are both divine. The spacious stores are crammed with endless racks of all sorts of fun clothes for both men and women. Instead of big names, it's big themes, like a rack of one-piece jump suits, a section of all things sequin, or an enormous bin of printed scarves. Steenhouwersvest 34a

→ www.episode.eu



BRUSSELS

Avoid the Manneken Pis and head instead for the nearby shops showcasing mannequins in vintage fashion.

Burlesque Vintage A small shop that is the sort of place you pop into for five minutes every week to see what new has come in. The stock is all peculiar and not necessarily stylish. Don't be disappointed when you discover that, despite the name, this isn't a shop with burlesque clothing; but it just might have that one-off, shimmy bustier or purple leather fringe jacket you never knew you wanted but now desperately do. Zuidstraat 64

Bernard Gavilan Perched on the corner of a cute little square, this shop is a must-see for anyone interested in women's fashion. All vintage and all fabulous, the sparse but well-selected stock makes you want to buy anything that fits. The friendly proprietor, formally a hat designer, is happy to help you explore and has some irresistible finds, such as a stunning feather and purple velvet hair fascinator from the 1930s. (There is also a Bernard Gavilan in the student district of Ghent.) Steenstraat 27

→ www.bernardgavilan.com

Foxholes At the opposite end of the spectrum – and a mere block away – you find piles of flannel shirts, nappy hats and old sneakers that are now trendy. This is where to dress cheaply and old school: T-shirts and hoodies, all a bit ragged. The ugly sunglasses and the hat that might have belonged to your grandfather come together to make anyone look like they belong in a hip underground jazz club.



Idiz Bogam Next up, the less upscale but more trendy shop where those in the know head to pick up a statement piece or to add retro flair to any outfit. For those daring enough to pull off a mini Go-Go dress in an eye-dazzling pattern. The fashion is contagious; as soon as you enter, you feel the need to wear something outrageous. You'll soon find something. Rue Antoine Dansaert 76

→ www.myspace.com/idizbogam

The art of bread

After a failed attempt to increase output, the Himschoot bakery realised that hand-made was the only option

COURTNEY DAVIS

Decades of baking bread in the small basement of the Oud Huis Himschoot means that merely entering the shop is to be overwhelmed by an entrancing smell. Combine that with the sight of golden loaves on old wooden racks tucked into a historic building on one of Ghent's most picturesque squares, and it's easy to see why this is a favourite bakery of both locals and tourists alike.

Mark Raynaert, a life-long baker, digs his hand deep into a bag of *bloem* – regular flour – and then reaches into a bag of *rogge bloem* – the rye flour used to make the best-selling *roggebroed* – and compares the two, explaining the difference in colour, texture and weight. Standing there after a long night shift, hands covered in white, a wealth of knowledge seems to radiate from him.

It is obvious he is continuing in the tradition of the original baker, Himschoot himself. During the First World War, Himschoot made the most dense, nutritious and filling bread. While most other loaves weighed in at about 600 grams, his were 800 to 900 – yet sold at the same price. Himschoot's reputation as a great baker grew, and the name became synonymous in East Flanders with good bread.

Today, the bakery sells about 600 loaves a day of more than 70 varieties. The four small ovens downstairs run all night long, as

Raynaert and three other bakers work in the hot basement, with oven temperatures at 220 degrees.

"When I was growing up, I saw my dad bake bread and learned how to make it from him," Raynaert explains. He began work as a baker at 19.

Raynaert spent three months with the original Himschoot before the bakery's namesake retired and sold the business. Raynaert stayed on and eventually bought it himself in 1983. For 17 years, he worked tirelessly, seven days a week, from 22.00 at night until 14.00 in the afternoon. "I missed out on a lot," Raynaert admits. "I didn't get to go to parties or celebrations. It was really hard on my wife. I wouldn't do it again. While I enjoyed the work, it is a hard, hard job."

Mark's crowning achievement is his bio bread. When he saw the weekly organic market held on the Groentenmarkt outside his bakery every Friday, he realised he could sell there, too, provided he used different ingredients. He now makes six types of bio bread: muesli, sunflower, pumpkin, linseed, sesame seed, a surprising melon seed and a cutely named koala bread, with an Australian bio flour.

In 2000, Raynaert sold the bakery – but continues to work there three days a week on an all-night shift. "Life is much better now," he smiles.

In the meantime, the current owner of

Himschoot Bakery, Philippe Van Melle, is trying to pin down the essence of this infuriating, fickle talent known as baking. It turns out it's not so easy. Trying to replicate Raynaert's lifetime experience, passion and dedication is a heady task.

Van Melle, owner of two Ghent restaurants, purchased Himschoot when he noticed the iconic shop where he bought bread as a child was for sale. He at first attempted to recreate the successful recipes in larger ovens at a different location with more baking capacity. His goal was to fill orders from surrounding hotel restaurants – the Marriot among them – that wished to serve their guests the famous Himschoot bread.

But bread baked by others in another location turned out differently. He quickly learned that the famous Himschoot bread could only be made at the Himschoot bakery – and, it seems, by only one man. "It just wasn't the same quality," Van Melle says. "We had the same recipes, the same ingredients, but somehow the end result was just not the same."

Now he's trying to learn baking directly from Raynaert. He has a few years until Raynaert fully retires to try to produce the same quality bread. Otherwise, when Raynaert leaves, he takes the Himschoot legacy with him.

No recipes, please

Van Melle's first lesson is that baking doesn't

come with a recipe. Nine years ago, he was amazed to discover that, in all the years since the bakery's existence, there was not a single recorded recipe. Everything was taught by hand, in person, baker to baker. When Van Melle, 49, asked Raynaert how to make a certain bread, Raynaert did what he always does; he grabbed a handful of this, two handfuls of that, a pinch of this. Van Melle's solution was to measure Raynaert's hands to see just how much a handful of flour was.

But in the end, he had to give up and admit that it takes something other than a recipe to bake bread, which is part science, part artistry. Even if it's baked in the Himschoot cellar, Van Melle can tell when it's not a Raynaert loaf.

"He can work with dough that is wrong and make it right," says Van Melle.

Raynaert is training three apprentices at Van Melle's behest, hoping that the bread at Himschoot will continue to be excellent decades down the line.

While Van Melle studied law and applies his strong business sense to his growing food empire in Ghent, he is also happy to continue with tradition. He grew up on Himschoot's bread and is saddened by all the chain stores and mobile phone shops in what were once mom-and-pop enterprises. It's both his ability to recognise a good product and his nostalgia for the shops of his childhood that keeps him inspired.

Last year, another famous Ghent Bakery, Patisserie Bloch, shut down, saying it could no longer manage financially to produce its baked goods by hand. Van Melle now employs three former Bloch bakers, who continue to make their desserts from traditional recipes.

"If the food isn't good, people aren't going to buy it," says Van Melle. "You can sell the wrong products in the right shop. The bread at Himschoot is well known, and an excellent baker makes it. The pastries at Bloch were well known in their own right."

And so he has the right product, and now two shops. Van Melle has opened Huys Himschoot on Donkersteeg a few blocks away to sell the famous Bloch pastries. But it is only at the Himschoot where, for the next few years at least, you can sample the best-made bread in Belgium. Get it while it's warm. ♦

Himschoot is open seven days a week from 7:30 to 18.00 (but come early for a good selection)



© Photos: Julie van Schooten



BREAD 101

STORAGE: Kept in its wax bag, bread will last up to three days. Pop it in the freezer to make it last a week longer.

TO SLICE or NOT TO SLICE: Each bakery offers the option of running your loaf through a slicer. Some people believe that by not slicing the bread, it will stay fresher longer, but bakers shrug at this idea. Bread is not really meant to last for longer than a couple of days.

LOCAL SPECIALTIES:

- *Roggerverdomme* is quite famous, plus it's fun to say. It's the Himschoot's favourite bread – the *rogge* – combined with dried fruit in a small, slightly dense loaf. People rave about it; the shop sells up to 40 loaves a day and 70 on the weekend.
- *Chocoladebrood* is a small rectangular loaf filled with chocolate pieces. Eat it fresh out of the bag, if they have any left.
- *Mueslibrood*, a round loaf, is also very popular, and it's easy to see why, with huge pieces of fruits, nuts and grains.

Cost-cutting panic or investments in human capital?

In times like these, where we have to do more with less, there are two types of managers. **Those who cut costs** across the board, and **those who even now choose to continue to invest** prudently. Which type are you? The financial crisis and the uncertain economic situation are confronting managers with new challenges, but all too often they are also driving them to take decisions that are infused with panic and doom-and-gloom. But the ones who are forward-thinking and keep to their own course don't slam on the brakes – instead, they invest in the future.

Knowledge determines your competitive power

An organisation that wants to maintain and strengthen its competitive position in the global economy must be powered by a well-oiled knowledge engine. Your workforce is your greatest capital and lifelong learning is an absolute necessity. The acquired knowledge flows back into your company and your knowledge capital grows larger and larger, increasing your competitiveness. This will keep you competitive in the rapidly changing economic context. We call this 'learning with impact'.



Investing in training: costs versus benefits

Too often, training is still regarded as a cost instead of an investment. However, companies that view their personnel policy from a strategic standpoint continue – even when the economy becomes a serious challenge – to invest in training programmes for their most strategic employees. Investing in talent and training now guarantees you a significant jump on the competition when the economy gets going again.



Vlerick, your partner in tailor-made training programmes

Those who have participated in a Vlerick training programme are undoubtedly better prepared than other employees to take on today's challenges. Via in-company programmes – focused on the development of individual employees as well as on organisational development – Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School offers you a collaborative project fully tailored to your needs. Thanks to in-depth knowledge of both local and international economic environments and years of

experience in training management talent, the School can develop a specially adapted management training programme for every organisation, in each phase of its development, targeting the most diverse aspects of its business.

More info on our management programmes?

Consult www.vlerick.be

Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School

September 10 at 18.00
Radisson Blu Park Lane Hotel

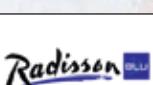
The Antwerp Expat Welcome Party 2009

Exclusively for CEOs, HRD & HRM, Corporate Mobility Managers and newly-arrived and resident expatriates.

Looking for: a new home, living tips, expat clubs and associations, contacts in Antwerp's community, news and information, ideas on what to do.

Enjoy: a welcome buffet party, live entertainment, practical information, tombola, meeting expats and locals / all for free.

Register at events@ackroyd.be before September 7, 2009.



♦ Agenda ♦

BBQ Championship

The Belgian Barbecue Championship is 30 August in the centre of Torhout, West Flanders. Fish, chicken, pork and beef on the grill, music on stage

→ www.defielesoofen.com



FLANDERS TODAY
AUGUST 26, 2009



Kunst & Zwalm

ALAN HOPE

Setting artworks within nature has been all the rage since at least the Romantic period, when landscape was promoted to a fully-fledged genre and the word "picturesque" came to be used to describe mountains, rivers and trees. You can see the attraction: an idyllic country setting can only benefit the artwork on show, and even visitors turned off by stuffy museums can hardly say no to a leisurely outdoor stroll.

That's the thinking behind *Kunst & Zwalm*, a nine-kilometre art *parcours* in the Flemish Ardennes, which the organisers describe as "a priority area for sustainable tourism" in East Flanders. The biennial event is scattered about the Zwalm area, a cluster of tiny towns spread over 34 square kilometres not far from Ghent.

Kunst & Zwalm has always been about collaboration between the rural environment and artists from home and abroad. This year, artists come from every part of the Benelux.

This year you'll find the work of Flemish artist Tamara Van San, who exhibited earlier this year with Koen Vanmechelen in Turnhout, and is currently showing in Bornem with Wim Delvoye. Her speciality is the juxtaposition of small and large, hard and soft, comforting and edgy to create "beacons" that are playful and almost organic.

Ghent-based Kelly Schacht, meanwhile, brings a chessboard pattern to other surfaces, like the deck of a barge or an anonymous stretch of road, forcing something urban into a bucolic setting to disturbing effect (something humans do well).

Flemish artist Roel Jacobs has planted an arboretum in which every species is endangered, and every one of the 17 trees is fictional, represented by a post sunk at the roadside, like a memorial to some tragic accident. "The idea is to confront people and get them to think about what it means to be an endangered tree and what we can do about them," he explains.

Kunst & Zwalm is open only on weekends from 13.00 to 19.00. On Sundays, there's a guided bicycle tour, and bikes are available for hire.

29 August to 13 September

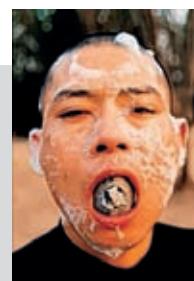
Starting point:
De Kaaihoeve
Natuureducatief Centrum
Oude Scheldestraat 16
Meilegem-Zwalm
→ www.kunst-en-zwalm.be

MORE ART CIRCUITS THIS WEEK

Nomad: 40 Years of Roland Patteeuw → Bruges

Watou 2009 → across Watou, West Flanders

Contour 2009 → across Mechelen



Borgerhout

Trix
Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00,
www.trixonline.be
AUG 27 20.00 Reagan Youth

Brussels

Fuse
Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89,
www.fuse.be
AUG 29 23.00 Ricardo Villalobos

Le Bar du Matin

Alsembergsesteenweg 172;
02.537.71.59, <http://bardumatin.blogspot.com>
Concerts at 21.00:
AUG 27 The Young Sinatras AUG 28
Onda Sonora AUG 29 DJ Reedoo SEP 3
My TV is Dead

Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.226.12.57,
www.botanique.be
SEP 1 20.00 Múm



Antwerp

Buster
Kaasrui 1; 03.232.51.53,
www.busterpodium.be
AUG 27 22.00 Buster Jam

Brussels

Archiduc
Dansaertstraat 6; 02.512.06.52,
www.archiduc.net
AUG 31 22.00 Wonderland

Sazz'n Jazz

Koningsstraat 241; 0475.78.23.78,
www.sazznjazz.be
AUG 29 21.00 Mayumi Motohashi & Friends
SEP 2 21.00 Harptallica

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45,
www.themusicvillage.com
Until AUG 29 21.00 Buster & The Swing
SEP 2 20.30 The Elements
SEP 3 20.30 Mahé Parker



Brussels

Brasserie Le Central
Place Laneau 1; 02.426.72.34,
www.cubadelcentral.be
AUG 29 18.30 Cuba Del Central:
Pacco Diatta (Senegal), Zulema Sexteto (Cuba) and Ritmo Latino (Cuba/Chile)

Café Bonnefooi

Steenstraat 8,
www.bonnefooi.be
AUG 26 22.00 Flor Da Pele (Brazil)

Café Merlo

Baksteenkaai 80; 0499.11.67.45
AUG 26 22.00 No Angry Young Man (Belgium)

Roeselare

De Beurs
Stationsplein 15; 051.69.53.68,
www.beursroeselare.be
AUG 28 22.00 Buscemi & Squadra Bossa



Antwerp

Amuz
Kammenstraat 81; 03.248.28.28,
www.amuz.be
AUG 30 13.00-17.00 Laus Polyphonie: Musica Antiqua Revisited, study on the future of old music, featuring keynote speakers Sigiswald Kuijken and Björn Schmelzer, followed by a reception

St Boniface Church

Grétrystraat 39; 03.239.33.39,
www.boniface.be
AUG 29 19.30 Tour of members from British choral groups Chorleywood Choral Society and Berkhamsted Choral Society, conducted by Graham Wili

Brussels

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be
AUG 31 20.00 Seoul Philharmonic conducted by Myung-Whun Chung, with Sunwook Kim, piano: Debussy, Ravel, Bartók, Unsuk Chin (part of Klara Festival)

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

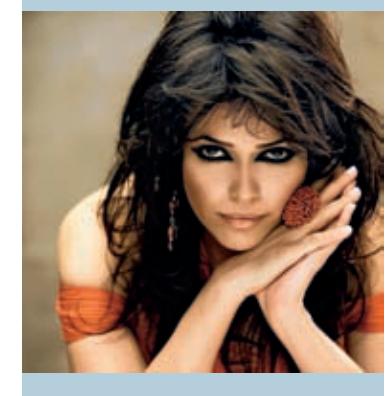
Yasmin Levy

5 & 7 October

Brussels & Ghent

The daughter of famous composer and cantor Yitzhak Levy, who dedicated his life to collecting and preserving the songs of Sephardic Jews, Israeli singer-songwriter Yasmin Levy is touring in celebration of her new CD *Sentir*. It's an evening of Ladino, flamenco and more contemporary work, including a beautiful interpretation of Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" and, through modern technology, a duet with her father - who died more than 30 years ago.

→ www.yasminlevy.net



Flagey

Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20,
www.flagey.be
AUG 28 20.00 Gavriel Lipkind, cello; Roman Zaslavsky, piano; Rachmaninov, Busoni, Shostakovich 22.00 Tolvan Big Band, jazz (part of Klara Festival)
AUG 30 14.00-18.00 Workshops for all the family with U Theatre's drummers (part of Klara Festival)
AUG 31 12.30 Queen Elisabeth Violin Competition 2009 prizewinners concert 22.00 Wildbirds & Peacedrums

♦ Agenda ♦

(part of Klara Festival)

Onze-Lieve-Vrouw ter Kapelle

Kapelmarkt ; 02.507.82.00,
www.placedelachapelle.org
AUG 29 20.30 Les Pléiades Ensemble:
von Biber, Schmelzer, Reger, more

St Michael and St Gudula Cathedral

Sinter-Goedeleplein; 070.22.21.07,
www.ticketnet.be
AUG 27 14.00 Tour of members from
British choral groups Chorleywood
Choral Society and Berkhamsted
Choral Society, conducted by Graham
Wili

Leuven

Sint-Michielskerk
Naamsestraat
http://sint-michielskerk.be
AUG 28 20.00 Tour of members from
British choral groups Chorleywood
Choral Society and Berkhamsted
Choral Society, conducted by Graham
Wili



www.tour-taxis.com

Until SEP 5 20.30 Peter Pan, adapted
from Régis Loisel's comic strip, staged
by Emmanuel Dekoninck (ages eight
and up; in French with Dutch and
English surtitles)



Antwerp

Cathedral of Our Lady

Handschoenmarkt; 03.213.99.51,
www.dekathedraal.be
Until NOV 15 Reunion: From
Quinten Metsys to Peter Paul Rubens,
masterpieces from the Royal Museum
of Fine Arts return to the cathedral

Diamond Museum

Koningin Astridplein 13-23;
03.202.48.90,
www.diamantmuseum.be
Until AUG 31 HRD Awards 2009 - A
Fairy Tale: diamond jewellery design
competition

Fotomuseum

Waalse Kaai 47; 03.242.93.00,
www.fotomuseum.be
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?,
photos from the Iraq war
Until SEP 13 Nick Hennes: Red
Journey, photographs from Russia
Until SEP 13 De film van mijn leven
(The Film of My Life), prize-winners of
the Canvas photography contest, plus
work by Flemish photographer Lieve
Blancquaert

Mekanik

Sint-Jacobsmarkt 73; 0495.48.74.50,
www.art-trek.be
Until SEP 12 Art Trek 6, work by 14
of the most promising young graphic
artists from around the world

Middelheim Museum

Middelheimlaan 6; 03.827.15.34,
www.middelheimmuseum.be
Until SEP 27 Chris Burden, videos,
sculpture and installations by the
contemporary American artist

Rockox House

Keizerstraat 12; 03.201.92.50,

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

Blankenberge

Cultuurcentrum Casino

Zeedijk 150; 050.43.20.43, http://
cultuur.blankenberge.be
Until OCT 4 Masereel en de zee
(Masereel and the Sea), retrospective
on the 120th birthday of the
Blankenberge-born Franz Masereel,
with drawings, wood cuts, paintings
and ceramics

Bruges

Arentshuis

Dijver 16; 050.44.87.11,
www.brugge.be
Until SEP 27 The Museum of
Museums 2009, intervention by
contemporary artist Johan van Geluwe

Brussels

Belvue Museum

Paleizenplein 7; 02.511.44.25,
www.belvue.be
Until SEPT 20 Be-Arts, works by
Félicien Rops, Hugo Claus, Henri Blès
and Rik Wouters

Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be
Until SEP 13 Sophie Calle,
photographs, audio and video works by
the contemporary French artist
Until SEP 13 Disorder, sculptures and
paintings by French conceptual artist
Bernard Venet and comic strips about
Venet and the art world by Belgian
artist Jacques Charlier
Until SEP 13 Portraits of Artists: 80
Years of the Centre for Fine Arts in
Pictures

Until SEP 13 Young Belgian Painters
Award 2009, works by the finalists

Until SEP 13 100 Sex d'Artistes,
imaginative illustrations by Belgian
artist Jacques Charlier depicting the
genitals of 100 internationally known
artists

Until SEP 13 Repromotion, installation
of sculptures and photographs by
Belgian contemporary artist Jan De
Cock

City Hall

Grote Markt; 02.279.64.35,
www.brussel.be/artdet.cfm/4440
Until SEP 27 The Brussels Epic of

Willy Vandersteen, works by the
Flemish comic-strip artist (part of
Brussels BD Comic Strip festival)

Costume and Lace Museum

Violettestraat 12; 02.213.44.50,
www.brucity.be
Until SEP 29 stoffen & +, textile works

Czech Centre

Troonstraat 60; 02.213.94.30
Until SEP 10 Jiru: Two Generations of
Photographers, prints by Czech Vaclav
Jiru and his nephew Jiri Jiru, who,
upon his return to the Czech Republic
after living in Brussels for 20 years,
became President Vaclav Havel's official
photographer

De Elektriciteitscentrale (European Centre for Contemporary Art)

Sint Katelijneplein 44; 02.279.64.35
Until SEP 27 Nothing is Permanent,
exhibition of contemporary art from
the 1970s to today, selected by long-
time Brussels gallery owner Albert
Baronian

Elsene Museum

Jean Van Volsemstraat 71; 02.515.64.21
Until SEP 13 Fading, works by 40
contemporary Belgian artists

European Economic and Social Committee

Belliardstraat 99 - 6th floor;
02.546.86.78
Until AUG 31 My Europe, art and
design by 40 contemporary Czech
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), 200 years
of shop windows and interiors

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

ISELP

Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70
AUG 27-OCT 17 Véronique Poppe:
Human Capital, paintings; Françoise
Joris, ceramics; Bénédicte Monaville,
jewellery

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63,
www.new.mjb-jmb.org

DON'T MISS

Gypsies in the Park

29 August
Beukenpark
Oostkamp

This annual event in West
Flanders bring both local
and international Gypsy
musicians to the stage, plus
video and photo exhibitions
and activities for kids.
Within the line-up of original
Gypsy and Balkan
music, you'll find jazz,
pop and folk, featuring the
Antwerp-based Gipsy Ska
Orkestar (*pictured*), Romanian
trumpeter King Naat
Veliov and the fairly amazing
group Szia, made up of
teenage Flemish girls playing
Hungarian and Romanian
Gypsy music.

www.gipsysinhetpark.be



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

MIVB Headquarters

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

Musical Instruments Museum

Hofberg 2; 02.545.01.30,
www.mim.fgov.be
Until OCT 11 Alan Lomax in Italy
'54-'55, photo exhibition honouring the
late American ethno-musicologist

Royal Museum of Art and History

Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11,
www.kmkg-mrah.be
Until AUG 30 Vegetal City: How to
Reconcile City and Nature, a 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 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,
www.wiels.org
Until SEP 13 Ben Cain: The Making of
the Means, large-scale installation by
the former artist-in-residence

World Bank Brussels

Marnixlaan 17; 02.552.00.33
Until OCT 31 In the Eyes of a Woman:
Roma Portraits, the lives of various
Roma communities seen through the
eyes of female photographers

Deurle

Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens

Antwerp

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28,
www.desingel.be
AUG 29-30 Transparent by Henry
Purcell, performed by young singers
and instrumentalists from the annual
summer opera workshop

Vlaamse Opera

Frankrijklei 1; 070.22.02.02,
www.vlaamseopera.be
AUG 30 20.00 Laus Polyphoniae: Le
Poème Harmonique and Vlaams Radio
Koor in La Vita Humana by Marco
Marazzoli



Brussels

Tour & Taxis
Havenlaan 86C; 02.548.25.80,

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Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23,
www.museumdd.be
Until SEP 13 When the mood strikes...
Wilfried & Yannicke Cooremans collection of contemporary art, with works by Franz West, Thomas Schütte, Jean-Marc Bustamante and Jan Verkruyse among others
Until SEP 13 Robert Devriendt, paintings by the contemporary Flemish artist

Ghent

Caermersklooster
Vrouwebroersstraat 6; 09.269.29.10,
www.caermersklooster.be
Until SEP 13 Deftig vermaak, ijdel vertier (Distinguished Leisure, Vain Diversion), paintings and photographs of Ghent's bourgeoisie from the mid-19th century to the Belle Epoque

Design Museum
Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99,
<http://design.museum.gent.be/>
Until OCT 11 Yrjö Kukkapuro, retrospective of the Finnish designer from the late 1950s to the present day
Until OCT 11 Ceramics by Raoul Dufy (1877-1904)
Until OCT 11 Schoonhoven Silver Award: Poetry in Silver, competition with 55 international artists

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 artist Goran Djurović
Until SEP 13 De Tentoongestelde Mens: Andere culturen als amusement (Exhibited People: Other Cultures as Entertainment), posters and photographs from carnival shows and asylums that put the physically or mentally handicapped on display

MIAT
Minnemeers 9; 09.269.42.00,
www.miat.gent.be
Until OCT 18 Ghent on porcelain cards from 1840-1865

Museum of Fine Arts
Fernand Scribedreef 1 – Citadelpark; 09.240.07.00,
www.mskgent.be
Until SEP 20 Raoul de Keyser, 1960s and 1970s works on paper by the contemporary Belgian artist

Sint-Pietersabdij
Sint-Pietersplein 9; 09.243.97.30,
www.gent.be/spa
Until SEPT 6 Walder De Mulder, photos of conductors, photographers and other artists from the 1960s to the 1990s by the Ghent-based photojournalist
Until SEPT 6 Walter De Buck Verbeeldt (Represents), 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 30 Carl De Keyzer: Trinity, photographs on power and violence by the Flemish Magnum agency photographer

Hasselt
Modemuseum
Gasthuisstraat 11; 011.23.96.21,
www.modemuseumhasselt.be
Until AUG 31 Ti + Hann: Temporary Shop II, installation/pop-up store
Until OCT 31 In Her Shoes, trends and evolution of women's shoe design, from 1900 to contemporary designers

Z33
33 Zuivelmarkt (Béguinage) (011.29.59.60)
Until SEP 27 Werk nu (Work Now),

group show on the world of work by 20 international contemporary artists

Kemzeke

Verbeke Foundation
Westakkers; 03.789.22.07,
www.verbekefoundation.com
Until NOV 15 Artificial Nature, outdoor sculpture and installations by contemporary Belgian and European artists

Mechelen

Speelgoedmuseum (Toy Museum)
Nekkerspoelstraat 21; 015.55.70.75,
www.speelgoedmuseum.be
Until JAN 3 Thirty-five years of Playmobil

Overijse

Den Blank
Beginhof 11; 02.687.59.59,
www.denblank.be
Until SEP 13 Afgedankt (Discarded), photos of abandoned spaces by Flemish photographer Henk van Rensbergen

Tervuren

Royal Museum for Central Africa
Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11,
www.africamuseum.be
Until AUG 31 Omo: People & Design, functional objects made and used by the Omo people of south-western Ethiopia
Until JAN 3 Persona: Ritual Masks and Contemporary Art, masks from the museum's and other collections, shown alongside works by contemporary African artists

Ypres

CC Ieper - Lakenhallen
Grote Markt 34; 057.23.94.80,
www.acci.be
Until OCT 4 Wat overblijft (What remains), recycled assemblages by Flemish artist Camiel Van Breedam



Aida - Outdoor Opera: Verdi's Aida performed outdoors; conducted by Giuliano Betta and Eric Lederhandler and staged by François de Carpentries
Until SEP 19 at historic sites across Belgium
www.ideefixe.be

Beaufort 03 - Art by the Sea: Third edition of the contemporary art triennial, with works by 29 Belgian and international artists
Until OCT 4 at outdoor locations up and down the Belgian coast as well as in Ostend's Kunstmuseum aan zee 070.22.50.05,
www.beaufort03.be

Roller Bike Parade: Four months of rollerblading in the streets with technical staff on hand to help with equipment rental and maintenance
Until SEP 26 in Brussels (Friday), Antwerp (Saturday), Koksijde (Sunday) and Hasselt (Monday); all parades confirmed or cancelled by 16.00
www.belgiumrollers.com

Antwerp

Jackyland: Concerts every Thursday by local talent, followed by after-parties
Until SEP 10 at Magiq Spiegeltent, Oosterweelsteenweg (Noordkasteel)
www.jackyland.be

Zomer van Antwerpen: Annual summer arts festival featuring concerts, theatre, circus, open-air film, sunset barbecues and a woodland bar
Until AUG 30 across Antwerp 03.224.85.28,
www.zva.be

Blankenberge

Sand Sculpture Festival: Annual event

featuring sculptures and reliefs by the best sand sculptors in the world; this year's theme is pirates
Until AUG 31 in Blankenberge
www.zandsculptuur.be

Bruges

Nomad: 40 Years of Roland Patteeuw a walking tour of art organised by one of Flanders' hardest working curators, with work by Roger Raveel, Dan Van Severen, Raoul De Keyser, Jef Geys and more
Until SEP 1 at indoor and outdoor locations across Bruges 050.44.30.40,
www.ccbrugge.be/Nomad

Brussels

August Fairy Tales in the Museum Workshops for kids to learn the story behind paintings in the museum
Until AUG 28 at the Fine Arts Museum, Regentschapstraat 3 02.508.33.33,
www.fine-arts-museum.be

Boterhammen in het Park 2009: Free outdoor lunchtime festival of Flemish and Dutch rock and pop music, plus children's activities. Bring a picnic or sample the sandwiches on sale
Until AUG 28 12.00 at Warande Park
www.abconcerts.be

Briggittines International Festival: Contemporary theatre and dance festival
Until SEP 5 at Les Briggittines, Korte Briggittenstraat 1 02.213.86.10,
www.briggittines.be

Brussels 2009 BD Comic Strip: City-wide festival celebrating Brussels-based comic strip artists and the rich history of the Belgian comic
Until DEC 31 across Brussels
www.brusselscomics.com

Bruxellons 2009: Annual theatre festival featuring popular theatre, music, cabaret and a children's programme, plus buffet and bar
Until SEP 26 at Château du Karreveld, Jean de la Hoeselaan 3 02.724.24.24,
www.bruxellons.net

Death Ride at the Atomium: 100-metre adventure drop off the top ball of the Atomium
Until AUG 31 Tickets (€25) from Belventura pavillion in Eeuwfeestlaan
www.belventura.be

Feeërieën 2009: Free outdoor music festival with a diverse programme, including bluegrass, piano, electro-acoustic, jazz and ukulele
Until AUG 28 19.00 at Warande Park
www.abconcerts.be

Fiesta Latina/Fiesta Africa: Two cultural parties marking the end of the summer festival season with music, dance, food and drink
AUG 28-30 in the Louizalaan car park (Fiesta Latina) and the Waterloosesteenweg car park (Fiesta Africa)
www.fiesta-latina.be,
www.fiesta-africa.be

Het Theater Festival: Festival focusing on the state of the performing arts in Flanders and the Netherlands. Includes dance, theatre, text and children's theatre, mime and theatrical installations

AUG 27-SEP 5 at Kaaitheter, Kaaistudio's, and Bronkstheater
www.theaterfestival.be

Klara Festival: International new music festival and the Brussels' leg of the Festival of Flanders
AUG 28-SEP 11 across Brussels 070.210.217,
www.klarafestival.be

Midi-Minimes Festival: Classical

music festival with short, lunch-time concerts
Until AUG 28 12.15 at Miniemerkerk, Miniemerstraat 62, and Royal Conservatory, Regentschapsstraat 30 02.512.30.79,
www.midis-minimes.be

Dilbeek

Jospop: Electro/dance and rock festival featuring Gorki, The Hickey Underworld, Daspop, and Maxim Lany, among others
AUG 28-29 in Ijsbergstraat 0474.64.88.83,
www.jospop.com

Ghent

Parkkaffee: Activities in the park for the whole family, including music, magic and circus workshops, tarot card reading, campfires, plus food and drink
Until AUG 31 at Parkkaffee, Groenestaakstraat 37, Mariakerke 09.227.99.94,
www.parkkaffee.be

Hasselt

Muscadet Aperitiefconcerten: Outdoor live music ensembles, choirs and orchestras every Sunday morning
Until AUG 30 11.00 at Het Stadsmus, Guido Gezellesstraat 2 011.23.98.90,
www.hetstadsmus.be

Knokke-Heist

International Cartoon Festival: Annual event this year highlights the increasing role of internet and television in cartoons. Includes Press Cartoon Belgium, featuring guest cartoonist Kevin Kallaugh
Until SEP 27 at Lagunahall, Krommedijk 57 050.630.430,
www.cartoonfestival.be

Leuven

Zomer van Sint-Pieter: Classical music festival with short, lunch-time concerts grouped according to historical period
Until AUG 28 across Leuven 016.23.84.27,
www.zomer-van-sint-pieter.be

Lommel

Lommel Leeft 2009: Free concerts in parks and public squares
Until AUG 27 across Lommel (Limburg province) 011.39.97.99,
www.lommelleeft.be

Parkpop: Concerts by pop, rock, blues, salsa, reggae, disco or soul groups every Thursday evening
Until AUG 27 20.30 in Kruidtuin, Brussel 129 015.29.78.68,
www.parkpop.be

Ostend

The Big Ask Again: Call for participants in making the "Big Ask again" video clip. The film calls for dancing to furious rhythms as a way of asking the world's decision makers to take action to save the world's climate
AUG 29 14.00 on Ostend beach, Klein Strand
www.thebigaskagain.be

Torhout

Belgian BBQ Championship: Forty teams compete by preparing five different dishes using fish, chicken, pork, beef and a fruit dessert. The jury chooses the winner based on food, stand and atmosphere. Visitors can sample creations and enjoy music, square dancing, street theater and more
AUG 29-30 on the Markt 059.56.45.98,
www.defielesoofen.com

Watou

Watou 2009: Annual festival of

DUSK 'TIL DAWN

SAFFINA RANA

End of summer
Having a bout of the holiday blues? Cheer up, because the last weekend in August explodes with a spate of parties and festivals to mark the traditional end of the summer in Brussels.

If you can't wait for the cool summer nights to party hearty, start with the street parties, which launch early. The Fiesta Africa takes place over three days from 28 August between Gulden Vlieslaan and Waterloosesteenweg and is a rare opportunity to sample the Kinshasa scene. A host of African DJs will be spinning everything from Souk to Congolese Rhumba. Headlining the bill is DJ LaRage (*pictured*) of Le 36 and Le Klubb in Kinshasa, flying in especially for the event. If the noon start is too early, join the throng dancing in the marquee until 2.00 on Friday and Saturday.

Taking place at the same time, a mere 10-minute walk away, is the Fiesta Latina on Louisalaan. As well as expat artists living in Belgium, bands and DJs are also being brought in from Brazil, Cuba, Bolivia and Ecuador. Expect to discover Brazilian samba, capoeira and choro and a generous helping of Latin jazz styles.

Of course, each festival will be replete with barbecues and copious amounts of local home brews, like Congolese palm wine.

Once you've had your fill of world music, amble over to the terrace of Bar Fontainas on Sunday between 15.30 and 20.00 for its last Lazy Sunday electronica session of the season. Lady Jane and Sushiflow will spin an upbeat, inspired mix of all things new and tuneful (which is bound to include generous helpings of Depeche Mode).

► www.fiesta-africa.be
► www.fiesta-latina.be

contemporary art, architecture and poetry. This year's title is Tussen Taal en Beeld: Verzamelde Verhalen (Between Language and Image: Collected Stories), which looks at the relationship between image and language
Until SEP 6 in indoor and outdoor venues across Watou (West Flanders) 059.56.45.98,
www.watou2009.be

FACE OF FLANDERS

Bert Rijken

When the going gets tough these days, the tough get online. Bert Rijken, 27, is from Bree in Limburg, hometown of Kim Clijsters. He's a recent graduate in commercial communications from the XIOS university college in Hasselt and applied informatics from the XIOS in Diepenbeek (the name stands for "Centre of Expertise for Industry, Education and Society").

Rijken is currently "between jobs", but no question of sitting around soaking up the sun while sending out a few CVs and reading Jobat in a hammock.

"Being a jobseeker doesn't bring much knowledge along with it," he writes on his blog. "Surfing the internet is pretty aimless and standing still is as bad as moving backwards, so I'm looking for a more useful way to fill my weeks."

Ask not what prospective employers can do for you. Rijken, with time on his hands, is offering himself out to the highest bidder, but the currency of exchange is knowledge. On 24 August, he launched his down-time initiative Teach Me Something.

"Every week will be devoted to learning. From Monday to Saturday I'll be learning something new around a given theme. Because I'm looking for a job at the moment, the ideal response is one that challenges me to learn something in a niche area, after which I can apply my knowledge in a professional way. Of course, it should be something in my area of interest. The web, communication in this medium, new technologies used there."

In other words, organisations or companies are invited to propose a challenge for Rijken, which will make use of his skills and expertise, and which is something that can be done in a week.



At the end of the week, he'll give you a progress report.

Any interesting responses? "For the moment, there haven't been many reactions. My blog is rather new, so only a few people follow it," he explains in an email exchange with *Flanders Today*. "But someone on Twitter mentioned today he was looking for a good challenge to send in. I do tweet the link now and then, hoping to get some response on it. Once I get started and my first challenge is up and running, people should be more willing to send in ideas. I hope."

So is this the face of the new generation of Flanders' entrepreneurs? "I'm very fond of creativity, not in an artistic sense, because there are lots of people with more talent than me. But in the area of 'thinking out of the box' I certainly think I'm up to grabbing opportunities with both hands. I'm hoping I'll get some offers that don't fall into my normal scheme. But I'm not going to refuse a challenge, whatever it is."

→ www.berrijken.be

ALAN HOPE

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



zwanger →

Spending a couple of days at the coast is not recommended for those wishing to get away from it all. A stroll along *de dijk* – the promenade – will often involve seeing someone you know. At times Belgium can be quite a small place.

Last week, we bumped into the lady who works at the baker's in our village and her grandson. She informed us that her daughter was *zwanger* – pregnant – with her third. Perhaps it was this comment that got me looking, and what I saw was how many visibly pregnant women there were on *de dijk*.

Once you start looking, they seem to be everywhere. I have just read that Ann Van Elsen is pregnant. Ann is een BV (*een Bekende Vlaming* – a well-known Fleming) – in other words, a local celebrity – who presents TV and programmes. Naturally, she is *compleet in de wolken met deze zwangerschap* – completely "in the clouds" with this pregnancy. Though, since her husband is a professional footballer, perhaps "over the moon" is a better rendering.

For the birth itself, the soon-to-be parents have decisions to make: *thuis bevallen* – give birth at home; *een epidurale verdoving* – an epidural anaesthetic; or *een keizersnede* – a Caesarian section. And then the *suikerboontjes* – sugar beans – have to be chosen and the birth card made ready at the printer's waiting for the vital details.

And with the baby born, the

working mother is entitled to *bevallingsverlof* – maternity leave, though in these times this may affect your job. *Het Belgisch Instituut voor de Gelijkheid van Vrouwen* – The Belgian institute for the Equality of Women – reports *een groeiende aantal geschillen in verband met zwangerschap* – a growing number of disputes in connection with pregnancy.

For those having difficulty conceiving, a move to a particular street in the town of Retie in the province of Antwerp may be in order. The local *burgemeester* claims De Middenakkers Street is *de vruchtbare straat in Vlaanderen* – the most fertile street in Flanders: *dit jaar werden er twee baby's geboren en zijn er opnieuw acht vrouwen zwanger in de straat* – this year two babies have been born, and there are eight women pregnant again in the street. It's not clear whether it's the same eight as previously. And no mention is made of the cause.

Perhaps the greatest birth of the year was that of Kai-Mook in Antwerp Zoo. The baby elephant has been a crowd puller ever since. The zookeeper who was midwife to K-M's mother gushed: *de geboorte was bijna zo mooi als die van mijn eigen twee dochters* – the birth was almost as beautiful as those of my own two daughters. Such dedication is commendable, but I'm glad for him he remembered the *bijna*.

→ kindengezin.be

bite

SHARON LIGHT

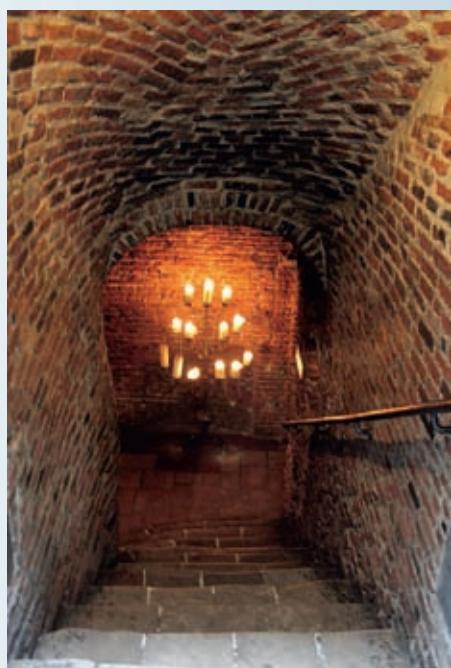
Pelgrom

Sometimes a meal is about much more than food. At Pelgrom on Pelgrimstraat in the centre of Antwerp, for instance, it's all about atmosphere.

At its most basic, drop in at Pelgrom to enjoy a meal in a 15th-century cellar. The labyrinth of long, brick rooms are lit almost entirely by candlelight. It takes a while for your eyes to adjust – and you may never see your food properly – but the ambiance is unique and fun for both tourists and locals.

Pelgrom offers a basic menu with familiar brasserie food (croque monsieur, pasta bolognese) at fairly reasonable prices, given its location and character, and quite a good beer list.

Add to your experience by enjoying a visit at the private museum based on the upper floors of the 16th-century house. Open on weekends, it's only €3 for this diverting tour amongst the tiny rooms where eight people once lived together. Although the residents are long gone, there are a few live animals on these upper floors, just as there would



have been all those years ago.

But back to the cellars: one area is called De Grootte Ganz Medieval Restaurant, where you eat with wooden spoons (and your hands), the waiters are in medieval costume, and period music plays in the background.

The venue can also be hired for private events, starting with a standard buffet and working up to historical banquets. These are based in a particular century, and you get to choose between the wooden spoons and normal cutlery. The highest-end banquet is the "culinary walk through Flanders", where each

course hearkens from a different Flemish town – for example, Gent's *waterzooi* and Brussels' waffles make appearances on the menu.

Top off any of those options by hiring a mediaeval magician, musician or dancer to join your festivity. It's all a bit silly, but in a charming way.

→ www.pelgrom.be

The last word →→→

Easy act to follow

"If three women perform for a hall full of men, you'll always get applause."

Karen from the Flemish pop band K3, who last week began the search for a new member

Baby talk

"Everything went well. But everyone knows that bringing a child into the world is hard work."

Mieke Vandekerhove, mother of Olympic medallist Kim Gevaert, who last week gave birth to Vince

Tough love

"Now that I have responsibility for the police, my children had only one question for me: am I going to punish them harder if they do anything wrong at home."

Annelie Turtelboom, the first Belgian woman ever to become minister of the interior

The slow lane

"I drive so slowly I've twice been overtaken by a funeral cortege." Comedian Urbanus, who has recorded a song on road safety with teen idol Regi