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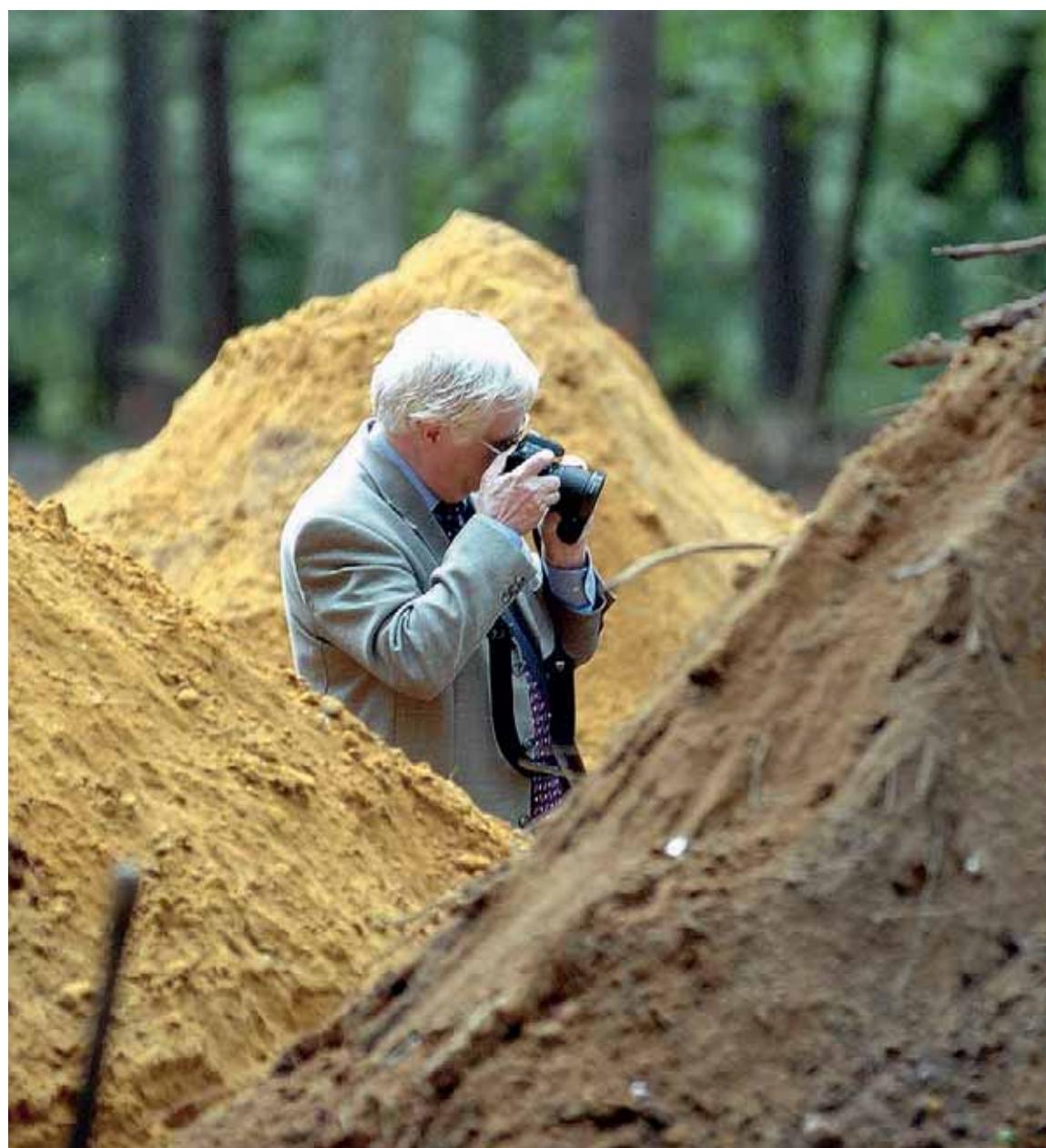
A shortage of information technology skills at home is causing big Belgian companies to outsource more and more IT activities to India. A new treaty between the countries is making it even more appealing for Indian workers

**Year of the Kaat 8**

Fashion designer Kaat Tilley is launching a new spate of designs – from her trademark gothic romance dresses to jewellery to lighting – from her fantastical watermill home in Asse

**Athletes go to Deaflympics 11**

A contingent of seven athletes is competing in Taiwan this week during the Summer Deaflympics. Alternating winter and summer events every two years, it's the only global sporting event for deaf people



Stones unturned

News editor Alan Hope has been covering crime in Flanders for 15 years. He digs out his files of unsolved cases

Just last month in the United States, the impossible happened: a child who had gone missing 18 years ago turned up alive. The case gave parents of missing children new hope, and missing children's centre Child Focus plans to bring out new photos of some of the children on its books showing how they might have aged since last they were seen.

In the case of Liam Vanden Branden from Mechelen, it's been 13 years. For Nathalie Geijsbregts from Leefdaal, it's been 18 years. Gevrije Cavas from Molenbeek has been missing for 24 years.

Unsolved crimes have a hold on everyone involved in them, including reporters who write about the cases. In the 15 years I've

written about crime and justice in Belgium, many cases have been left unsolved. This is a selection from my files, and one older case which seemed earlier this year to be taking a turn toward the light – for a short time, at least.

1984: Missing girl

Lieve Desmet went missing in May of 1984 between her school in Tielt and her home in Dentergem, in West Flanders, at the age of 13. That same evening her bicycle and schoolbag were found abandoned on the road. Her body was found nearly three months later in a field.

→ *Continued on page 5*

Clijsters hits form in New York

LEO CENDROWICZ

Flemish tennis phenomenon Kim Clijsters rolled back the years at Flushing Meadows on Sunday when she defeated number three seeded Venus Williams to reach the quarter-finals of the US Open.

Regardless of whether she makes it beyond that – her match against China's Na Li was due to take place on Tuesday night as Flanders Today went to press – Clijsters has proven that she has returned to form since coming out of a two-year retirement in March.

tournament back on the courts after giving birth to her first child last year. Clijsters, the 2005 US Open champion, is a wildcard who does not even have a ranking yet.

Last Friday, Clijsters beat fellow Fleming Kirsten Flipkens 6-0, 6-2 in an emotional tie for both players. Describing Clijsters as "a bit like my big sister", Flipkens said she had known her since she was five, when she first started hitting balls at their tennis club in Diest.

www.usopen.org

**Director of Flanders House sacked**

Finances "not basis for sacking"

ALAN HOPE

The director of the Flanders House in New York has been sacked for apparent financial irregularities linked to bills from a company he owns. Following a personal investigation by LDD leader Jean-Marie Dedecker, the director, Philip Fontaine, was accused of billing Flanders House for events organised by Italian Days, a travel company he owned with his partner. Dedecker claimed more than €30,000 had changed hands this way.

"The financial irregularities covered in the media are not the basis for the sacking," Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters

told *Flanders Today*. "I have no problem with whistle-blowers, but a number of the allegations contained in the media coverage are not correct."

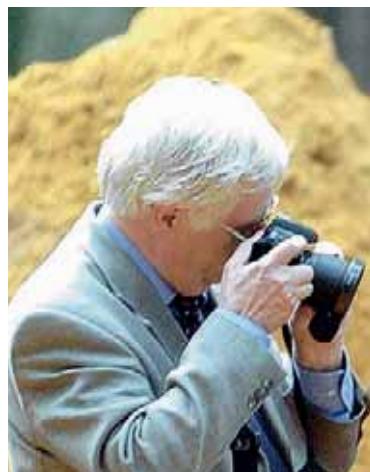
Dedecker stands by his claims, but Peeters insists that there is not enough evidence of financial mismanagement to bring a case against Fontaine. "The board of directors also looked into other allegations that did not make the papers. It appears there was a problem with staff policy. Yesterday [3 September] the chairman of the board also flew

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The case of the Brabant Killers is by far the biggest unsolved mystery in Belgium's history. Between 1982 and 1985, a gang of armed men carried out random violent attacks and robberies that left 28 people dead and 20 injured. Most people think rogue gendarmes were involved; some say it goes higher. This photo from 2004 shows the efforts to find the body of one of the suspects shot by police. But the body was never found, and no-one has ever stood trial for any of the crimes.

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News in brief

Limburg's hunters are not sufficiently thinning out the wild boar population, according to the mayor of Beringen, who last week appealed to the army to do something about the growing numbers of the animals in a small area of land bounded by his town and Leopoldsburg, Houthalen, the E314 and the Albert canal. There are now 120 wild boar in the area, which pose a disease risk for livestock and other wildlife, he said.

Flanders is this week **one person**ality **magazine** richer, with the launch of Els, dedicated to comic actress Els De Schepper. The magazine is intended to be a parody of celebrity magazines like Oprah and, closer to home, Goedele. If the response of the public is positive, the magazine will continue. Meanwhile, it was also announced last week that film director Erik Van Looy is going to launch his own magazine in January called Erik.

Flanders' minister-president Kris Peeters, who is also minister for agriculture, last week helped **launch the kiwi-berry**, a new grape-sized fruit variety being grown in the region. The Actinidia arguta, also known as the Siberian gooseberry, has a smooth skin and tastes slightly sweeter than a normal kiwi. It is high in calcium and magnesium and contains twice as much vitamin C as a lemon.

Twelve prison officers are employed at a detention centre in Tongeren to guard a total of 0 prisoners, it was revealed last week. The facility, a renovated remand centre, is intended to house 17 young offenders. The first inmate will not arrive until November.

The Flemish government has a total of **38 cabinet heads**, just behind the Walloon executive at 43, and ahead of Brussels at 21. Foreign policy minister Kris Peeters and innovation minister Ingrid Lieten each have seven cabinet heads and deputies, interior minister Geert Bourgeois has six and budget minister Philippe Muyters five. Peeters' Walloon counterpart, Rudy Demotte, has no fewer than 11 cabinet heads and deputies.

Former Ghent police chief **Peter De Wolf**, dismissed last week by federal interior minister Anne-

Pre-schoolers lacking in Dutch – but not in cavities

More than one in five children in Flemish pre-schools does not speak Dutch at home, according to figures compiled by the family organisation Kind & Gezin. In some parts of the region, the situation is considerably more serious: in Ghent, the figure is 33%, in Genk, 40%, while in Antwerp more than one-half of all three-year-olds has a language disadvantage.



© Shutterstock

The numbers are growing. By the time those pre-schoolers go to primary school, the proportion of three-year-olds not speaking Dutch at home will have gone up to 22%, with corresponding rises in the cities – 56% in Antwerp, for example.

The situation can be a problem for the children themselves but also for their Dutch-speaking classmates, who are effectively held back by the amount of attention the others require from the teacher.

Interestingly, it appears to make little difference if one or both parents themselves went to school in Flanders. According to Groen! MP Meyrem Almaci – who has a background in researching education and children of immigrant backgrounds – families tend to use the language of their background even into the second or third generations.

• According to another survey released last week, one-half of all Flemish children have never been to the dentist by the age of six. "That translates into exceptionally bad dental health," said a spokesperson of the socialist health insurance company Boyd Molson, which conducted the survey on more than 5,000 Flemish children. "We found that when dentists have to extract a tooth, in more than one-half of all cases the child is visiting the dentist for the first time."

Chairman of the Union of Flemish Dentists, Jean-Paul Michiels, admitted there is a great deal of work to be done but declined to comment on the figures themselves without studying Boyd Molson's methodology.

mie Turtelboom, will do "everything in his power to restore his reputation" by appealing against the ruling. De Wolf is currently appealing a 12-month suspended sentence for faking an official document when his car was involved in an accident while he was driving drunk. His lawyer said his dismissal, for what Turtelboom called a "grave professional error", undermined his pending appeal.

VTM's **Jill Peeters** has been voted European Weatherwoman of the Year by the world climate conference of the United Nations in Geneva. Peeters was praised for the "expertise" she brings to her reports and "the passion" with which she explains the climate and its effect on the public. At the end of last year she was given an award by the European Meteorological Society.

Companies and public institutions planning to offer a **seasonal flu** injection to employees should wait until the end of November to ensure there are enough vaccines for risk groups, the government's influenza commissioner said last week. Virologist Marc Van Ranst said there were 2.5 million doses of vaccine on order, but media attention focused on swine flu will probably push up demand. Healthy people should postpone their inoculation until the risk groups – the elderly, pregnant women and health-sector workers – have been covered.

About 60 female students took part in a protest at the Royal Athenaeum in Antwerp last week on the first day of the new school year. They were demonstrating against the school's policy of **banning the hijab**, the Muslim headscarf. A dozen students removed themselves from the school register in protest while a further 37 refused to take off their scarves. "I understand it's an emotional issue," said school director Karin Heremans. "But I don't understand why they would put their headscarf above educational opportunities."

people took part in last weekend's Gordel, the annual Flemish cycling and walking event in the municipalities around Brussels



Flanders House faces overhaul after sacking

Continued from page 1

to New York to speak to staff, Peeters said.

Fontaine is accused of living the high life in New York on his salary of between €200,000 and €250,000, while at the same time depriving his staff of basic benefits like workplace accident insurance or health insurance – the staff are employed on US contracts instead of being given more generous Belgian conditions. According to Dedecker, Peeters had been aware for some time that not all was well, but declined to take steps. In the end, the problems between Fontaine and his staff led to his downfall: it was insiders at Flanders House who blew the whistle to Dedecker.

Flanders House was the brain-child of Geert Bourgeois from the period when he was Flemish minister for foreign policy under Peeters I. Bourgeois resigned when his N-VA party left the ruling cartel with CD&H in the federal government, just weeks before Flanders House was officially opened in February. The initiative has been criticised

at home, largely on the grounds of expense: Flanders House occupies the 44th floor of the historic New York Times building in the heart of Manhattan.

Fontaine was born in Grimbergen and studied law at the Catholic University of Leuven. He worked for an American sports equipment retail business based in Brussels. That led him to move to Cleveland, Ohio, where he had a string of jobs in online commerce, including a spell at the top of eBay France.

Fontaine's experience in online jobs may explain his alleged lack of people skills. He is said to have poisoned relations with established sponsors of Flanders House, like KBC bank. In one case, he made a unilateral decision to move the traditional 11 July reception (marking Flanders Day) away from KBC's New York offices. He relocated it to the Museum of Modern Art, which is currently staging an exhibition on James Ensor. When this plan fell through, Fontaine came back to KBC, with a promise to pay half of the bill for the reception.



Philip Fontaine pictured at the time of the opening of Flanders House

The money has never been paid, and Fontaine claimed that a poster advertising an event to mark 21 July (the Belgian national day) broke the terms of the agreement between Flanders House and KBC.

"The Flemish government does not intend to change its policy on public diplomacy, although we will be looking to see if the structure and working of Flanders House can be improved," Peeters said. "We have invested a great deal of money in Flanders House. It's a terrible shame that the whole project is now suffering such damage after

barely a year."

Fontaine finally broke his silence at the weekend, with an interview in *Het Nieuwsblad*. "I have never committed fraud or taken any money that was not mine," he said. "I've had a long career, in senior posts. I was responsible for La Redoute, the largest website in France. I was director general of eBay France. Do you really think I would make a thief of myself for a few thousand euros? It's simply ridiculous." His problems with the Flemish government, he said, amounted to no more than "a difference in management vision". ♦

THE WEEK IN FIGURES

94%

prefer beer when they go to a café, compared to 2% for wine and 2% for alcohol-free drinks. The survey was carried out for the Brewers' Union and involved visitors to the websites of two newspapers



68%

still prefer wine in a restaurant, despite the growing popularity of beer with meals. Beer accounts for 24%

49%

prefer champagne at a reception, with beer narrowly beating wine: 23% to 21%

38%

of beer drinkers prefer a pils, compared to 14% for abbey and Trappist beers and 11% for strong blond beers like Leffe

€430,000,000,000

total government debt in 2014, according to official forecasts. At the end of July, the figure was €321 billion, or about €32,000 for every man, woman and child in the country

€25 billion

hole in the government's budget for this year, just slightly more than the public deposited in their own savings accounts in the first half of the year

85%

of children come to school by car, according to motoring organisation Touring; in 60% of cases Mum is driving, in 16% of cases Dad and in 8% the grandparents. Only 5.7% come by public transport and 4.5% by bicycle. Even Touring expressed surprise at the high car figure

4/5

of children describe themselves as happy to go to school, according to research from the University of Antwerp. Nine out of 10 like their teacher, and everyone likes playing on the playground

11,852

new homes under construction in the first five months of the year, 22% less than in the same period last year, according to the Flemish Construction Confederation

15%

more homes sold in August than the same month a year ago

FIFTH COLUMN

Patrick

Antwerp mayor Patrick Janssens is in a bit of pickle. Last week he had to sort out a disagreement within the city council over the long-awaited referendum on the Oosterweel crossing. Janssens had hoped for two questions to be put to the voters – about the contested Oosterweel viaduct but also about the alternative, a tunnel under the Scheldt River, which would have made him the champion of the city's outspoken environmental groups.

He had to give in, though. It was a very public defeat, which gave the ecologist opposition the chance to lambaste him. So much for the mayor's green image.

Janssens' coalition partner CD&V is widely believed to be behind this. Not that Janssens did nothing to bring this on: for years he supported the Oosterweel viaduct (also called the BAM route) because it is part of a larger Masterplan for Antwerp, which includes investment in public transport and urban renewal. Long after the greens, who originally supported the plans, had made a U-turn, Janssens continued to defend the BAM route.

"Walk and don't look back" was the route he took on this issue, although it did not work for him like it did for reggae singer Peter Tosh. In the end, Janssens made a volte-face and finally found himself shoulder to shoulder with many of his supporters. Until last week, that is.

It is remarkable how Janssens messed this up. Ever since he entered politics in 1999, when he became the president of the Flemish socialists, he has been a shrewd strategic thinker, resulting in several electoral victories. The most noted is the 2006 city elections, when Janssens halted the steady rise of the Vlaams Belang in the city where it all began for this ultra-right party.

Janssens campaigned with just one word: "Patrick". It said it all: a name that was at once familiar and, as the campaign never mentioned Janssens' party, transcended petty politics. Just like Patrick wanted. And although he all but pulverised his Antwerp coalition partners, he generously kept CD&V and Open VLD on board the city council, making it harder for them to criticise the well-liked mayor. Until now, that is.

So where does this leave Patrick Janssens? He will know in a couple of years. Unless he decides not to look back, of course.

ANJA OTTE

Students give teachers marks

Teachers' unions have given a mixed reception to a new device, developed by the University of Antwerp, which allows school students to award their teachers points for performance.

"The evaluation of teachers already takes place, carried out in a professional manner by the school management," said Hugo Deckers of the socialist union ACOD. "Students these days are more vocal than before, but that shouldn't be confused with expertise. Evaluation is also a skill."

The researchers point out that the system is designed to allow feedback, without necessarily being used as an evaluation tool. It requires users to answer a series of multiple choice questions, varying according to the educational level of the school, and then prepares a feedback report

based on their responses.

The system is fully in the hands of teachers, a university spokesman said. "So long as that's the case, and as long as the teacher is free to use it to get feedback on his lessons, there's no problem. It's not the intention that students consider it a right. It's also not intended for the use of school management."

Students have reacted more warmly to the device. "It's a good thing that something like this exists," said a spokesperson for the Flemish school students organisation VSK. "Students see teachers at work every day. They're quite capable of speaking out over the way for example a teacher organises his teaching time, or supports the students." ♦

Bolt strikes again in Brussels

LEO CENDROWICZ

A Kenyan quartet beat the oldest world record in athletics, eclipsing the 32-year-old 4x1500m mark of West Germany in an event that is not run at major championships and seldom at big meets like the Golden League. ♦



© Belga

Usain Bolt produced a scintillating performance at the Van Damme Memorial in Brussels on 4 September, running the 200m in 19.57 seconds, the fourth fastest in history. Roared on by a sell-out King Boudewijn Stadium crowd at the final Golden League event of the season and unperturbed by chilly temperatures that had the other athletes rubbing their hands to keep warm, the 23-year-old Jamaican triumphed in the fastest time run outside a major championship.

In the 100m, Jamaica's Asafa Powell stormed to victory over American Tyson Gay. Powell, the 2004 Olympic champion, clocked 9.90 seconds, with Gay, the world 100m silver medallist, 0.10 seconds behind.



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Stones unturned

Even after 25 years, police still find clues in unsolved cases

→ *Continued from page 1*

The only lead investigators have ever had is the suspicious disappearance of a local café owner, Gustaaf Vande Veire, about six weeks after Lieve's body was found. He left without a trace, taking his Volvo 144 with him. Two weeks later, the registration documents for the car were found floating in a canal.

A further 25 years later (last February), police searching for a missing man in an unrelated case found a similar Volvo 144 in the harbour at Roeselare. No human remains were found, and it's not even certain the car is that of Vande Veire.

An episode of the VTM documentary programme *Telefacts* in May this year brought in "dozens" of tips, police said. However, in the months since then, no new leads have emerged.

Frits Verhaege was an intern with the prosecutor's office in Kortrijk in 1984; now he is the chief prosecutor for the area. "After all this time, it becomes personal," he says, launching a new appeal for witnesses. "As the years go by,

cious: De Vleeschauwer was on duty alone at night in a barracks where he had control over access. Is it likely he would have admitted someone he didn't know?

From the start, De Vleeschauwer's family – in particular his brother Chris – suspected an inside job: Peter had been killed with the collusion of his fellow officers. The case recalled the murder of Simon Poncelet in Mons in February of 1996. It was an almost identical circumstance: police office, night duty, locked door. Poncelet's death was linked (by his father, who happened to be chief prosecutor of Tournai) to investigations into car-theft rings. A fellow gendarme was later arrested and charged, but charges were later dropped for lack of evidence.

The pressure by Chris De Vleeschauwer finally paid off when a court in Ghent this year took the case away from the prosecutor's office in Dendermonde, which covers the area where the body was found, and put it in the hands of a special investigator. A investigative team will review the entire enquiry.

The latest reports are that they

"Two weeks ago I dreamed I had found my son, but everyone kept telling me, 'That's not Liam!' I woke up in a cold sweat"

the chances of a solution diminish, but I still have hope. Different investigators have been occupied by the case, but for me it's a constant. Due to a combination of circumstances this investigation has followed me and follows me still."

1996: Police execution

Peter De Vleeschauwer was a gendarme in 1996, before the unification of the police. He worked in Sint-Niklaas, East Flanders, until he disappeared in November 1996 from the gendarmerie barracks. His body was found in Hamme more than a month later. He had been murdered execution-style, with a shot to the back of the neck.

The circumstances of the kidnapping were – and remain – suspi-

are paying special attention to leads that point in the direction of waste treatment and possibly the dumping of illegal waste. De Vleeschauwer, an active member of the green party (then known as Agalev), was thought to have been investigating in that area. "For the first time, I feel as if we're being taken seriously," Chris says.

2007: Murdered teenager
Annick Van Uytself left her friends at about 4.30 on the morning of Saturday, 28 April, 2007 to ride home on her bike after they had all been at a party in Schaffen in Flemish Brabant. That was the last time she was seen alive.

She sent an SMS to a friend just after 5.00, but when her parents tried to call her at about 6.30, they got no reply. Police later traced



The bicycle and schoolbag of Lieve Desmet (left), which was found on the day of her disappearance in 1984. Police officer Peter De Vleeschauwer (right) was kidnapped and murdered in 1996



© Photos: Belga

the phone to the area of Halen, far from any conceivable route home. Annick's body was later found in the canal at Lummen, in Limburg province. Investigators had difficulty determining the cause or time of death, and it seemed unlikely the body had been put into the water at the place it was found. However, one detail offered hope of finding her murderer: Annick's body, weighted down with stones, had been wrapped in a grey plastic bag of a very particular kind, which police could not at first identify.

In January of this year, the Leuven prosecutor's office announced a breakthrough. "We have found some grey bags that, while not identical to those in the case, bear a very close resemblance," spokesman Patrick Vits said. "That has allowed us to determine in which industrial sector the bags are used." Investigators hoped this find would narrow their search. Further details of what they discover are not being released.

Another possible lead is the man who has now called police five times to report that Annick was killed in a road accident by his friend. The man, calling from public telephones in the area of

Mol, says he was called out to help his friend dispose of the body. Investigators aren't commenting on the man's credibility, but they do want to contact him and released voice fragments in an effort to identify him. They also handed over recordings to a voice analyst. "On that basis, we have built up a possible profile of the caller," Vits said. "But we will not be announcing anything about that. We want people to concentrate on the voice."

2009: New photos from Child Focus

This week, Child Focus is due to release newly aged photos of some of the 11 children still missing in Belgium.

The organisation's oldest case is

that of Gevriye Cavas, who was only five years old when he was plucked from the street near his home in Molenbeek in Brussels and never seen again. That was in 1985. Since then, there have been no solid leads at all. Child Focus has produced photos showing what he might have looked like when he was 14, 18 and 24. He would now be 30.

Liam Vanden Branden was

perhaps the most terrifying disappearance. He was only two and playing at his grandmother's house when he disappeared, as if into thin air. "My mother-in-law lives on the Zennegat near Mechelen," Liam's father Dirk told *Humo* magazine in 1997. "There are not many houses around, and you don't see many people. In the beginning I didn't rule out the possibility that Liam might have fallen into the water."

The Zennegat is a confluence of the Zenne and the Dijle rivers, with the Nete joining them further up. "By the day after the disappearance, I was convinced Liam hadn't drowned," said Dirk. Workers on the quays had been crossing back and forward all day and assured him that the child had not gone into the water.

"In my opinion, Liam was kidnapped," he said. "In the best case, by someone who couldn't get over the loss of their own child. In the worst case, by a network. Two weeks ago I dreamed I had found my son, but everyone kept telling me, 'That's not Liam!' I woke up in a cold sweat."

► www.childfocus.be

The crime wave

Flemish crime writers are turning out meaty thrillers

ALAN HOPE

To be a crime writer from Belgium must be a bit like being a dramatist from Stratford: you have a long way to go to climb out of the shadow of the Number One.

For Belgian authors that's Simenon, certainly one of the greatest crime writers ever. For Flemish authors it's **Pieter Aspe**, who used to be the caretaker at the Holy Blood basilica in Bruges, and wrote a book because he figured it was the only way out of his humdrum existence.

Aspe is phenomenally prolific, writing at least one and sometimes two books a year. His novels are almost all set in Bruges, and feature detective Pieter Van In and magistrate Hannelore Martens. They're not only a crime-fighting team, they're also a couple. And Bruges, apparently, is the theatre of many terrible crimes. When *Flanders Today* interviewed him last year, he revealed that his new book would be called *Misleid*, and be set in the world of beauty contests. We thought he was pulling our leg with a silly pun, but it turned out to be true. That's the great thing about crime fiction: all human life is there.

Aspe has also given his name to a series of TV plays built around his characters. He no longer has anything to do with it, but his name alone is enough to keep it going as a hugely popular series. It's as if they'd decided *Morse* was too dull a title, and called it *Dexter* instead. But that's another story.



Christian De Coninck

Ann Van Loock and **Marc Sluszny** are an unusual couple – and not just because they're one of the few writing pairs in the crime world (Nicci Gerard and Sean French lead the field) but also because they're so mismatched. Van Loock is a teacher who writes novels and scripts for TV (*Spring* for kids, *Flikken* for grown-ups). Sluszny, on the other hand, is a figure perhaps too flamboyant to fit inside a novel. He's a commodity trader who once played in the Belgian Davis Cup team, who set a world record for bungee jumping out of a hot-air balloon, who climbed Annapurna without oxygen, and placed eighth in the world championships for fencing.

Their books are thrillers more than crime novels. The first, *Code Black*, has a tennis champion tracking down the former commandant of Auschwitz in his hideaway in the south of France. The latest, *Amulet*, promises a journey through history from the Vikings to the Nazis at Scapa Flow. Two heads are not necessarily better than one in writing, but they do help in thinking things up. We wonder how many heads it took to invent Marc Sluszny, but they did a good job.

► www.vanloocksluszny.com

Jonathan Sonnst is somewhat the baby of the group, born in 1976 in Eeklo, with five thrillers (and an autobiography) to his name to date. He made his debut in 2000 with the daring plot of a female protagonist, a former killer-for-hire forced out of retirement. His latest, which will be launched on the day this issue appears, is called *Madame Dictator*, and is yet another historical thriller (the shelves seem to be full of them) with yet another female protagonist, this time as the sort of regent to the heir to a stinking rich businessman. Things are made more difficult for her by the actions of Hitler and Stalin, who did indeed mess up a lot of lives.

► www.sonnst.be



Stan Laryssens

Ann Van Loock

Marc Sluszny

Marthe Maeren

Jonathan Sonnst

Mieke De Loof

Bob Mendes

Bob Mendes (real name David Mendes) is the doyen of Flemish crime writers, and a man more cautious than Philip Marlowe walking through a blackjack factory. Born in 1928, he worked as an accountant and tax consultant until he was 60, when he decided to throw caution to the wind and become a writer full-time (he had already published two slim volumes of verse).

Mendes' fiction ranges from crime fiction to spy thrillers to psychological thrillers. Earlier this year he took part in a Canvas investigation into the death of his father, a political activist deported to Auschwitz by the Nazis from the Dossin Barracks in Mechelen. His latest, *Dirty Money*, has a protagonist who works as an accountant with KPMG.

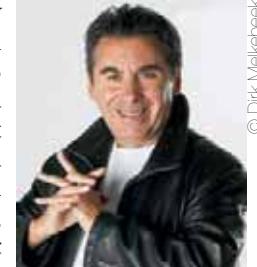
► www.mendes.be



•6

Christian De Coninck might be considered to have an unfair advantage over his crime-writing competitors: as the official spokesman for Brussels-Elsene police, he is a proper policeman. So he holds the key to the real information about what goes on in the shadowy corridors of the Kolenmarkt headquarters, which are put to good use in his police procedurals, the first of which, *The Prague Connection*, was the result of a serious illness and a long period of recuperation. So, at least in concept, were the two other parts of the trilogy: *The Octopus Complex* and *The Boomerang Principle*, which was launched in the literature temple Passa Porta last April.

De Coninck continues to work as spokesman for Brussels city police, while developing a reputation as a popular speaker. He won an award from an association that promotes Brussels dialect for his portrayal of the city and his use of dialect in his novels.



© Dirk Melkbeek

Stan Laryssens is probably the most feted of the bunch at the moment, with his 2008 memoir of painting fraud and Salvador Dali, *Dali & Me*. That made a splash worldwide and is due to be filmed with Al Pacino in the lead role as Dali, and Cillian Murphy (*The Dark Knight*) as Laryssens. The director is Andrew Niccol, who directed *The Truman Show*.

The year before he published his thriller, *The Sooner You Die*, in which a serial killer in Antwerp dresses his victims up as famous movie stars. His next book is reputed to be another memoir about time spent living with an Indian family in London.



© Johan Maeren

Marthe Maeren has as much of an unfair advantage as Christian De Coninck. Born in Knokke, she studied law and criminology at Ghent University (and consumer law in Stockholm!) and still works as a partner in a law firm. She made her debut as a writer with *Dead Letter* in 2004, featuring a protagonist who's a lawyer at the Ghent bar (write what you know). That was followed in 2006 by *Dead Hand*, and last year by *The Himmler Legacy*.

Maeren is the only writer in Flanders to tackle legal thrillers, in the tradition of John Grisham and Ed McBain's Matthew Hope series.

Mieke De Loof is not only a sociologist and philosopher, she's also a karate expert, which must have come in handy when she worked (according to her CV) as a night barmaid.

Her first book was a war story written with her father Jef, a GP and peace activist, which tackled the problem of nuclear weapons. She moved into crime with *Devil's Sacrifice*, which won the Hercules Poirot prize in 2004 when it was published. Her next, *Labyrinth of Delusion*, had a secret agent tasked with bringing down the Catholic church, and was nominated for both the Hercule Poirot and the Diamond Bullet awards.

New wave of IT outsourcing predicted

Belgium-India treaty will cut costs

A new treaty signed between Belgium and India is likely to increase the flow of information technology (IT) jobs to India, experts said.

Some of the country's biggest companies, such as Belgacom, Colruyt and Dexia, have already outsourced IT activities to India – in the case of Belgacom as long ago as 1996. The attraction is not only the comparatively low rates of pay of Indian workers but also their high level of IT skills. There are still thousands of IT jobs in Belgium that cannot be filled because of a lack of qualified applicants.

An Indian consultancy, Quantum Step, has estimated that Belgo-Indian contracts in the coming year could be worth as much as €4.6 billion: €1.3 bn for infrastructure maintenance, €1.9 bn in applications development and €1.4 bn for what is called business process outsourcing (BPO), which includes call centres, HR and accounting services.

Belgacom and mobile phone subsidiary Proximus began outsourcing (or more correctly offshoring: outsourcing to another country) in 1996, a

move the company said was provoked by the lack of qualified specialists here. Belgacom works with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), which is based in Mumbai and is the biggest provider of outsourcing services in India. The company is widely seen as the pioneer of the Indian IT industry.

Colruyt also worked with TCS in the beginning but decided in 2007 to set up its own IT subsidiary, Colruyt IT Consultancy India, based in Hyderabad. The company maintains all Colruyt IT infrastructure and software, as well as working on software development.

Dexia is a more recent convert to offshoring, with contracts signed last year with Mahindra Satyam in Hyderabad and Hexaware in Mumbai, which specialises in banking and financial services. Dexia now outsources 30% of its IT to India.

While the shortage of IT people with the right skills in Belgium now appears to be structural – "Even in times of crisis it's difficult to find people with the right profile," one industry insider said – Indian companies



Call centres in India provide support services for Dexia and other banks

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Beer • AB InBev

Leuven-based beer group InBev has sold its Tennent's Lager brand to the Irish C&C Group for €205 million. The move is part of AB InBev's policy of selling non-strategic interests with the aim of cutting a debt of over €40 billion accumulated during its acquisition of the US Anheuser Busch group last year.

Engineering • Tractebel

The Brussels-based engineering company Tractebel, which is affiliated to the Electrabel energy group, has won a contract to oversee the development of a new coal and GNL natural gas port terminal in Manappad, India. Partners in the project include G-Tec and the Port of Zeebrugge.

Glass • Bisazza

Italian glass mosaics and home decoration company Bisazza has opened a flagship store in Antwerp, its first in the country.

Food • Delhaize

The country's second largest retailer, which has extensive activities in the US, has sold the four stores it operates in Germany to Rewe, the leading local retailing group. Delhaize entered the German market in 2003 with outlets located near the Belgian border in Köln and Aachen, but competition from hard discounters hampered the development of its German activities. The Belgian firm is now believed to be seeking to expand in Bulgaria and Indonesia.

Investment • GIMV

GIMV, the investment arm of the Flemish government, will invest a further €4.6 million in the Swiss Endosense medical technology firm, which specialises in treatments to stabilise heart rhythms.

Property • Sales

House sales across Belgium rose 15% in August compared to the same period last year, according to preliminary figures released by the notary's federation. The surge follows a 19% rise in June and stable figures in July.

Shops • Autogrill

The Ghent-based motorway catering company Autogrill is pressing ahead with plans to develop commercial activities inside Brussels metro stations. It has already opened two Delhaize Shop'n Go convenience stores at West and Delta metros and plans to open a Starbucks outlet in Antwerp's Central Station.

House of HR adds extension

House of HR, the Roeselare-based human resources group, has announced the launch of what the group claims will be the cheapest temp agency in the country. Just Work will offer the "lowest basic tariff on the market," according to its managing director, Piet Perquy. Client companies get a worker, and that's all; everything else, as in the Ryanair model, is payable as an extra (payroll services, for example).

House of HR is one of Flanders' fastest-growing businesses. The group includes not only temp agency Accent Jobs for People but also technical services provider Logi-Technic, HR consultancy Peak6, service-cheques company SOS @ Home and regional job advertising agency heRVé. The company made a profit in the first half of 2009, at a time when the sector as a whole in Flanders was suffering a downturn of about 30%.

Just Work opened its first office in Kortrijk last week and plans to open seven more in the coming year. ♦

Westerschelde will not be dredged this year

The dredging of the Westerschelde – the sea passage between Breskens and the port of Antwerp – will not take place this year after all, Dutch prime minister Jan Peter Balkenende said last week. The admission came after a meeting of the government and is a clear sign from the Second Chamber of the Parliament that no easy agreement will be found.

The problem for Flanders is access to Antwerp; the Westerschelde needs to be dredged at 12 key places in order to permit access by large container ships, which currently can only sail through at high tide. The matter is crucial not only to the port of Antwerp but also to the whole of the region: goods arriving in Antwerp that are then taken on by road have to travel less distance across Flanders than those that come to Rotterdam – the alternative to Antwerp when the Westerschelde is impassable.

The two countries signed a treaty in 2005 that obliges the Dutch to dredge their part of the river, which accounts for most of it, by 2010. But the Dutch Council of State at the end of July suspended



Polder land would be under threat from higher water levels

the operation following a request from two nature organisations, which argued that government plans for nature protection were inadequate. The dredging would in effect raise the water level in the Westerschelde, and some polder land would then be flooded, with consequences for flora and fauna. The Dutch government will now set up a special commission to examine how an alternative environmental plan could be put in place. However, there is so far no word about who will make up what the government last week called "a

consortium with a great deal of experience", let alone how long it will take to do its work. The questions were due to be put to Balkenende at last week's session of the Second Chamber, but nature minister Gerda Verburg was suddenly taken ill and rushed to hospital, and the debate was suspended. Not, however, before Balkenende had admitted that dredging "will not take place before January". ♦

Dreams in design

After a tough year, Kaat Tilley is ready to release a collection that represents the last 25 years of her work – and her life

ALAN HOPE

Kaat Tilley, one of Flanders' best-known fashion designers, has been quiet for more than a year, but that's about to change. Following some difficult business conflicts she's not about to discuss with a reporter, she's cut all ties with the shop in the Koningsgalerij in Brussels that bore her name and is about to present a new collection of designs – dresses, fabrics, furniture, lighting and jewellery – at her home in Asse, an old watermill transformed into a fairytale.

She's calling the show *Albino* (expect a lot of white), and it also includes her drawings, paintings and a unique manipulation of old books. I met with Tilley, who turns 50 this month, in her atelier, surrounded by racks of dresses and bolts of fabric piled high.

"I just want to bring out my experience and the dreams I have. That's one of the most important things I want to convey, that dream can be reality...when you want it to be."

"My world has been expanding for some time – the collection but also furniture, interior textiles, jewellery." At *Albino*, visitors will see "the total world around the woman I have created over the last 25 years."

Flanders Today: Is that someone apart from you?

Kaat Tilley: I see it as apart from me but as someone who has my experiences and my way of looking out on the world, like an insect's antennae. It's not me, but I want to bring out my experience, to communicate with the world through her.

Are you trying to influence the world?

Hmm, yes something like that. I just want to bring out my experience and the dreams I have. That's one of the most important things I want to convey, that dream can be reality...when you want it to be. The clothes that I'm working on now start with a dream. Then I

bring in some elements that are a part of the world and a part of me. And then I bring in a real person to wear the dress, and there becomes three dimensions to the work – the person or the place and whatever they add to it. But the dress is totally my thing, and what I went to show as much as possible is the trip from the dream to the reality.

Your designs almost seem to want to change the way the world looks. Are you a very controlling person?

(considers) Yes, I am. Yes, I am. The most important thing is that when people come into my world, they feel enveloped, like an embryo, and totally safe – that they move through this world and something changes in them. That's the easiest way to explain it. It's a like a story – I help them to make their own

story – but they have to bring their own fantasy to the story. It's a way of leaving reality behind and afterwards to have something like a lightness. It's an experience for me, too. I don't want to think through big concepts. I try to make it as naive as possible. I've been doing this since I was a little girl.

You've mentioned "story" several times. Your designs could be illustrations for a children's book. Your dresses look like costumes.

That's why for all these years the fashion world hasn't known what to do with me. I studied in Antwerp with Anne Demeulemeester [the famous member of the Antwerp Six whose work tends toward the gothic]; we know each other very well, but I am always kept apart. But I don't want to be in the fashion world, really.

Do you have a story in your mind when you sit down to design?

My childhood was full of children's film – mostly Eastern European and English films. My designs are a combination of all those nice moments when I got totally into my fantasy. After a film, I would go for a walk and dream about myself in the film. Everything that I became later began in those moments: that's all I can remember from that time. You have to keep the child very close to yourself. That's what I meant about the embryo and the enclosed world. I have many paintings that show someone inside something like an egg. That's where it all started, and where it continues.

But fairy tales aren't always pleasant, are they? So, is there a darkness to your work?

There is some darkness, but I always want to transform it into beauty. For example, some years ago I had a collection that was inspired by scars. To me, this was one of the strongest collections I ever made because it was so symbolic. You have birth, you have your life, and you have death. I tried to make an aesthetic composition of that. It consists of the experience of falling down, of feeling bad, and afterwards, when you've come through it, you're much stronger. So there always the white and the black. It's something almost therapeutic.

Which brings up the question... is this therapy for you?

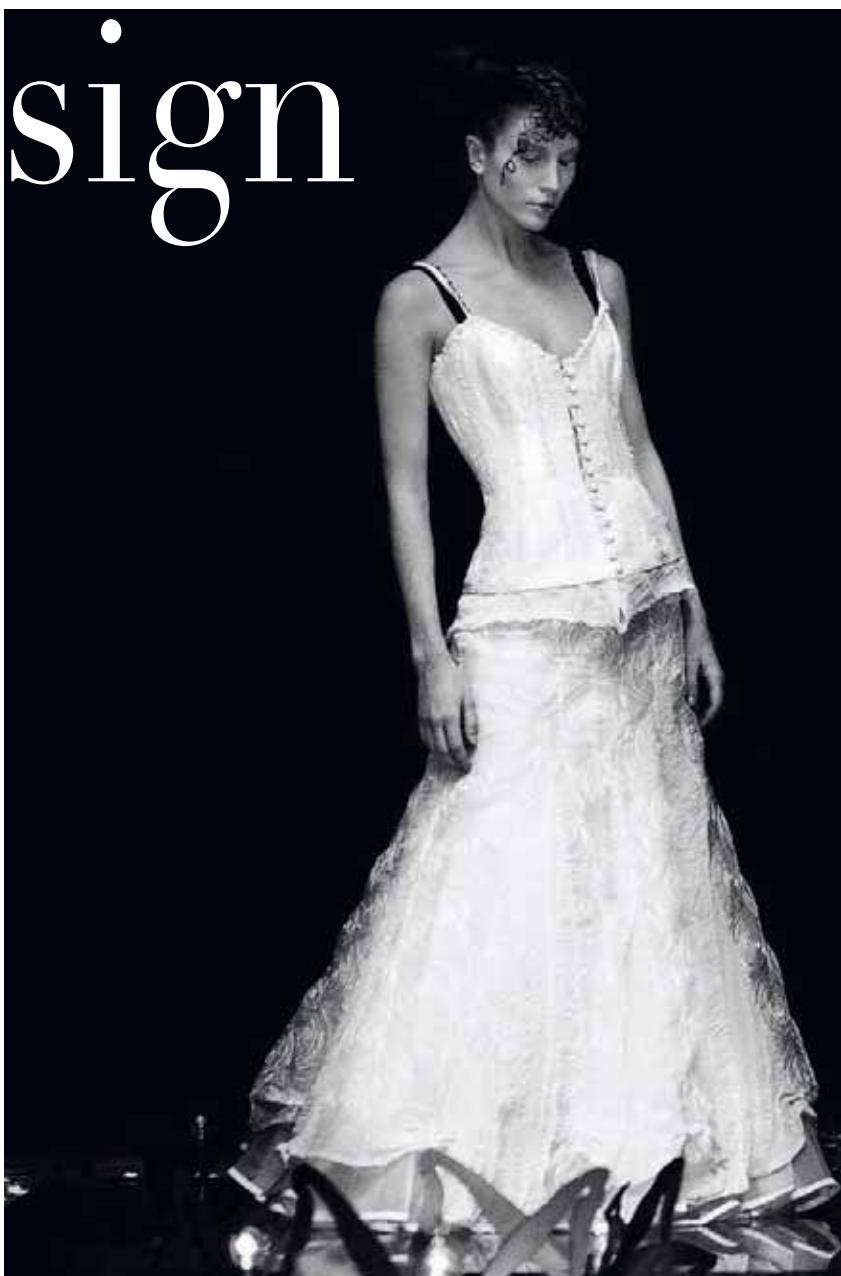
When I'm studying something, it's therapeutic, but then I bring it out into the world, and I want to hand it on. When people experience my clothes, they feel much lighter. So it's like therapy, but in an aesthetic way.

Are you looking for stimulation – or for peace?

Peace. Maybe I'm looking for both, but the end goal is peace. I always say, I want to find some rest. But I'm a person who now has 15 projects, and I cannot say no. Every moment, I want to do something new. Everything is interesting! ♦

Albino

18 September, from 21.00 (€15)
19-20 September, from 14.00 (€8)
Campo Molen
12 Asbeekstraat, Asse
Tickets available at fnac
→ www.kaattilley.be



Kaat Tilley



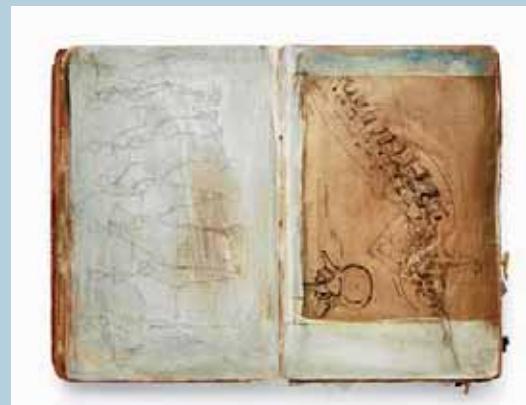
BEYOND THE SKETCHBOOK

Old books find new life in designer's hands

Most fashion designers make sketches in the initial phase, and the media vary from the finest paper to cocktail napkins. Kaat Tilley compiles hers – which are more dream-like drawing than practical design – in huge, old books. Their original content, like mediaeval palimpsests, has been obliterated by a white-wash, on which she then begins to work.

"Once or twice every year I leave Belgium for a month, and I take my books, which I buy from flea markets. Everything is in the books, all of my collection that's going to be born. This is where the world of my drawings begins. I have nearly 50 books now. Often they're music books. I try to leave a little bit of the history, so you feel the life in the book, and then I bring a new life on top."

Some recent books are stacked on the bench in her atelier, and others fill the bookshelves in the nearby house. Our interview stops while I browse through one. It's a fascinating object in its own right, beyond the fashion creations it leads to.



In places, the original text shows through, giving an effect like the menus and bus-tickets used in collage by Picasso. She considers them, too, works in themselves.

"I often work with the same models: after all these years, they know when I do this [draws a curve] how to interpret it in the dresses."

The books are a record of Tilley's time and concentration. "When I leave for a month, I work night and day, and I'm alone. Sometimes my daughters come for a couple of days, but then they go back to Belgium. They have asked me, 'If your house was burning down, what would you save?' and I answered, 'I'm taking my children and my books.'"

She has been working with these kind of books for more than 20 years. "I cannot do anything without my books. In them is all of my inspiration. But I need to bring them into reality. I go to sleep with it and get up with it."



FILM REVIEW



Lost Persons Area

Finally, what you've all been waiting for: a Flemish film in English. Okay, that's a slight exaggeration: there is Dutch spoken in this first full-length feature by director Caroline Strubbe, which opens across Flanders this week. But, based on an introspective atmosphere of silences and the presence of foreigners, the dialogue is scant and about half in English.

Strubbe has returned to filmmaking after winning awards in the 1990s with her short films, and this quiet, tense study of a family living – literally and figuratively – on the edge is a welcome return. Sam Louwyck (the deaf one in *Ex-Drummer*) plays Marcus, who heads up a crew repairing and maintaining electrical pylons in an industrial wasteland peppered by scrub brush and trailer homes. Seen through a grainy, hand-held camera, he lives there with his partner Bettina (Lisbeth Gruwez, a Flemish dancer in her film debut) and their nine-year-old daughter Tessa.

The passion between the couple flows easily from the beginning; it's with Tessa where the family's dysfunction shows. She spends most of her time getting filthy on the roof of the trailer when she's not cutting school to gather up dead animals, banana peels or other bits of garbage, much of which she hides under her bed.

Although sweet towards her, Tessa's parents don't seem to notice her obvious unhappiness. But Szabolcs does. He's the new Hungarian working on the site, who turns out to be very valuable when the company owners find out that Marcus' professional certificate has expired – credentials it turns out that Szabolcs has. This eventually uneasy partnership between the two men is made more complicated after a tragic accident.

Both parents are strong performers, but it's Zoltan Miklos Hajdu as Szabolcs and Kimke Desart as Tessa that boosts *Lost Persons Area* to a higher level. Szabolcs' even gaze and meditative attitudes, shared with Bettina in intimate conversations, give a sense of calm relief to the film – and to Tessa. For her part, we soon see – in one very poignant way and in one cathartic, disturbing one – just what she can do with all those found objects.

As the relationships break down, a film that, in many ways, is about doing what is best for those we love, moves steadily forward to its final quietly shocking denouement. And, in a strange way, it proves what Bettina confides to Szabolcs earlier on: "Even the worst mom is a good one."

Lisa Bradshaw

More online!

Find more photos of the work of Kaat Tilley on our website, plus an extended version of this interview, in which she discusses her work for Villa Rozenrood in De Panne, a care centre for terminally ill children. Villa Rozenrood will be the subject of a special feature in *Flanders Today* next month. After 18 September, check back for new images from Tilley's show *Albino*.

→ www.flanderstoday.eu

Building up to break down

The strange stage worlds of Wim Vandekeybus

LISA BRADSHAW

Born again: creatures hatch from shiny shells in Wim Vandekeybus' new *nieuwZwart*

Wim Vandekeybus is a gift to the world of dance. Don't stop reading if you "don't like" dance because you are under the impression that it is mincing and boring. That would be a terribly misguided conception which would only serve to prove you have never been to a performance by any of the Flemish Wave of choreographers.

Yes, having smashed up the boundaries of stage performance, having shocked, intrigued and delighted at international festivals the world over, Flemish choreographers and theatre-makers have been granted a historical distinction. Through a ground-breaking fusion of dance, theatre, performance art, music and literature, the group of artists belonging to the "Flemish Wave" re-invented their genres in the 1970s and '80s to world-wide curiosity.

This is perhaps made no clearer right now in Flanders than by Vandekeybus, evidenced once again in his latest production, *nieuwZwart*. His work cannot be called dance, nor theatre – it's both, and in so being, it's neither. Together with Flemish artist Jan Fabre, he has led modern dance in Europe into completely new territory.

Vandekeybus, 46, in fact danced with Fabre's company in the mid-1980s. "He was a kind of mentor, you could say," Vandekeybus tells me. And yet he absorbed this first performance experience without remotely imitating it. "If I had had more mentors, I would

not make the work I make; it would be similar to other things."

And Vandekeybus' work isn't similar to anything. He debuted in 1987 with *What the Body Does Not Remember*, an energetic – and slightly unnerving – piece in which dancers walk across bricks lined on the floor, before throwing them past other quickly moving dancers with razor-sharp precision. More danger awaited when they dropped darts between each other's feet and threw themselves into thin air, hoping the dancer coming from seemingly much-too-far away, catches them before they hit the ground. It was an exhilarating circus-cum-dance performance that won New York's prestigious Bessie Award and solidified Vandekeybus' relationship with Ultima Vez.

He found the young group of unpractised dancers in Madrid in 1986, and none of them ever looked back. He brought them to Brussels, where they are still based on Koolmijnenkaai along the canal in Molenbeek. Together, they have created a new show every year that has infused an industrial kind of cool to the discipline, seducing the critics and bringing in younger audiences.

Dancers climb chains, cling to aerial chairs, swing from the rooftops or become trapped in webs of cables, when they're not bashing into each other or throwing themselves to the floor. The group's sheer athleticism is as inspiring (and famous) as the story

they are telling. The dancers' interactions with the audience can be playful – or sometimes as wicked as their encounters with each other.

"It's like with cinema," Vandekeybus says. "You film something that is sentient, that is its own thing – but it's what you do with it that makes it your thing. It can be very surrealistic. I like the fantasy and the ability of people to enter into another role, an animal or the characteristic of fire. You have the fire in you, and people can understand what fire is."

From the beginning, Vandekeybus collaborated closely with musicians, particularly composer Peter Vermeersch of the band Flat Earth Society. Music is usually played live right on the stage, part of the performance rather than behind it. (*In nieuwZwart*,

the musicians are on a platform that swings precariously above the stage.) The music itself can dictate the movements – or vice versa. He also incorporates short films, mostly that he directs himself, into the performance – or sometimes pure costume theatre. The awards have rolled in – dance, theatre, music and film prizes.

Not bad for a guy with no formal training. After giving up psychology studies in Leuven, Vandekeybus pursued his interest in film and photography, eventually taking some theatre workshops and dance classes. But nothing was particularly a preparation for what he went on to create. "I had to start from scratch, in fact, from instinct, from physicality," he says. "It was like an investigation, in the beginning. I had to develop a language – out of *not knowing*."

nieuwZwart, which was on stage in Ostend's Festival aan zee in August and opens for a three-week run in Brussels' KVS this weekend, goes back to the beginning – the world's beginning. Seven figures birth themselves and then spend the next 90 minutes trying to survive. A central character narrates a text by Flemish author Peter Verhelst, while Mauro Pawlowski of the Belgian rock band dEUS plays the music live.

"It's not a lesson in how humans treat each other – all of the dancers are part of the same creature," explains Vandekeybus. "The musicians are the heartbeat and the temperament, the dancers are the bones and the tendons and the skin. The narrator is the rational part who tries to explain the emotional state."

He says that Pawlowski's music "creates a feeling of the remembrance of the ritual of rebirth. It's beyond realism and symbolism. It's an emotional thing that is not like 'Did you understand it?' but more like 'Did you feel it?'" ♦



Wim Vandekeybus (above) and dEUS guitarist Mauro Pawlowski collaborate on creation

THE NEW BLACK

Wim Vandekeybus may be a victim of his own success. Last year, I visited KVS in Brussels for the revival of the choreographer's *Spiegel*, a clever compilation of 20 years of work, and for the revival of his 2007 production *Menske*. Both were reminders of the awesome power of live performance that refuses to stick to any prescribed conventions.

I can easily say that I had never seen better dance in Belgium. But in the case of *Menske*, I can say that I have never seen better dance, period. *Menske*'s set and sound not only overwhelms all of your senses (including "touch" for some of the people in the front rows), the physical abilities of the dancers eventually seems nearly super-human. Australian actress and dancer Kylie Walters at one point (during a particular theatre-of-the-absurd moment) contorts her body to freak-show proportions. Between Walters' trash-talking urban construction worker persona, a pulsating soundtrack by Flemish rock musician Daan and a set that alternated between the urban industrial complex to an underground Brussels network of tunnels, you are, by the end, practically exhausted. And irrevocably impressed.

nieuwZwart, or *New Black*, has all of the elements of *Menske*. Kylie Walters again plays the narrator and she again struts about the stage in high heels, powerfully beating against the large-scale strips of metal that hang loose from the ceiling. Again, dancers get in and out of each other's way and shock the audience with their violent and courageous interactions.

The production begins with seven figures being born from under a huge, shiny space blanket that covers the entire stage. Figures in black come to explore these writhing creatures, wielding halogen flashlights and other sinister-looking devices. Walters delivers text written by Flemish author Peter Verhelst with an astonishing vocal power.

Mauro Pawlowski of the band dEUS composed the music for *nieuwZwart* and plays it live with two other musicians. Their small platform hangs from the ceiling, occasionally swinging a bit, especially when Walters climbs about on its underbelly maze of steel. It's impossible to tell if the dancers are moving to the music or vice versa – so seamlessly a collaboration was this.

nieuwZwart is excellent, both technically and artistically. It's an accomplished production for most choreographers. And yet I felt I had seen it before – and better.

Photos: Peter-Jan De Pue

A different kind of Olympics

A Belgian team arrived in Taipei this week for the Summer Deaflympics

We were all transfixed by Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt's amazing exploits on the track during the 2008 Summer Olympics, not to mention his performance last week in Brussels at the Memorial Van Damme athletics event.

But this month a group of Belgian athletes are taking part in a rather less-heralded but nonetheless equally important sports competition. It is the so-called Deaflympics in Taiwan, which last weekend welcomed a 14-strong Belgian delegation, including seven officials and seven athletes.

During the tournament, which began on 5 September, the team is competing in four of the 20 events: beach volleyball, table tennis, swimming and bowling. All those taking part are either deaf or hard of hearing. Some of the other events in the Summer Deaflympics are badminton, karate, cycling and football.

In existence for an astonishing 85 years, it's the only global sporting event for deaf people, and it's the first time it's being held in Asia. More than 5,000 athletes and staff from 81 countries are participating this year, the largest in the history of Deaflympics.

The authorities in Taiwan, which have provided 29 venues for the event, have gone to considerable lengths to ensure the Belgian delegation is made welcome during

the 11-day competition. A primary school in suburban Taipei is the official host school for the Belgian team.

Shen Lyushun, Taiwan's Representative to the EU and Belgium, says the hosts provide assistance wherever and whenever possible. "This ranges from transportation and tour guidance to cheerleading for the Belgians at the games," he says. "We hope that these events serve to better unite all deaf communities in the world. It's also an opportunity for Taiwan to showcase its many fine features to thousands of people from the rest of the world."

The Belgian team includes Kristof De Weerdt, 36, who made his international debut in 2003 in beach volleyball. Belgium is also represented in bowling by Paul Simons, 45-year-old member of the Bruges club, while Koen Adriaenssens, 33, is competing in swimming. All three men live in Antwerp province. Kurt Van Dam, 32, from Zaventem, meanwhile, represents his country in table tennis.

The Deaflympics provides "important recognition" for the athletes, says Paul De Weerdt, delegation leader for the Belgian team and member of the Turnhout athletics club. "It enables them to be recognised in their own right as top-class athletes in their particular discipline. That is the beauty of such an event."

MARTIN BANKS



The Belgian delegation competes this week in Taipei

The importance of sport to the deaf or hard of hearing "is probably much greater than it is for an able-bodied person," says Luc Rampaer, communication manager of the Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee. "In the past, the number of deaf people participating in sport was on the decline; but, I am pleased to say, that unwelcome trend has been reversed."

"It is a great honour to be associated with these people," continues De Weerdt. "They have worked really hard to get where they are, which is at the peak of their abilities, competing with the best from around the world."

The Summer Deaflympics was first held in Paris back in 1924, when it was called the World Games for the Deaf. The Winter Deaflympics were added in 1949. It was – and remains – the only global sporting event for deaf people.

Both Summer and Winter events are held

every four years (outside of an interruption during the Second World War); Belgium hosted for the first (and to date only) time in 1953, which was a Winter year. In 1995, the events received official recognition by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), whose current president is the Belgian Jacques Rogge. The last Summer Deaflympics was held in Melbourne in 2005; Athens will host in 2013.

This year, Taiwan has adopted the sprightly Taipei green tree frog as its mascot, known for its bursting vitality, and the games will be accompanied by plenty of razzmatazz. "Preparations have long been underway to make these the most spectacular Deaflympics games ever, and Taipei has fallen under the spell of Deaflympics fever," says Shen. "This event will mark a historic milestone for the hosting of international sporting events in Taiwan." ♦

► www.deafsport.be

fashionista

STÉPHANIE DUVAL



Wardrobe

If you ask Debbie Van der Steen what her dream wardrobe would look like, she'd probably name a lot of Ghent designers.

A couple of years ago, Van der Steen, together with two other like-minded fashion lovers, founded a non-profit organisation to promote Ghent's designers. The three of them decided to try to even the playing field a little between Ghent-based designers and creatives who have to compete with the better-known Brussels and Antwerp markets.

"When you graduate from the academy in Ghent, there aren't many organisations that will help you find a job or a way to show your work to an audience," she explains. "So we decided to create a means to promote these people."

Thus begins the story of Fashion Forward, which has been nothing but successful right from the start. Thanks to the efforts of

the team, which is now so busy it took on a fourth member, the rest of Belgium has picked up on Ghent's creativity. "We invite everyone to join us, as long as they have a connection to Ghent," says Van der Steen. "We don't use the 100% Ghent logo idly."

Fashion designers, textile designers, shop owners...all of them can add a preview of their work and their contact details to the database on Fashion Forward's website, which now holds more than 120 names. But the organisation does more than just compile information; it finds ways to bring them all in touch with possible partners, buyers and consumers.

This weekend, the second edition of Wardrobe will take place in the Hoet-Bekaert Gallery in the centre of Ghent. An extremely popular event last year, this time 15 designers are invited to show their collections to the press and to the public, who get the opportunity to buy what they like. Rather than running from store

to store, they're all here, collections in hand – from skirts to T-shirts to lingerie to bags and accessories.

With that air of casual cool that Ghent exudes, Wardrobe is an original combination of a fashion fair and a market place, with different activities to keep you entertained. On Saturday, photographer Thierry Van Dort, stylist Julie D'Hooge and make-up artist Annelien Debusschere will let you take a peek at a live fashion shoot. Via Fashion Forward's website, you can register to join a cosy BBQ on Sunday.

But of course the truly enticing part will be the stalls of the participating designers. We can't wait to discover Elisabeth Leenknecht's new collection of colourful glass jewellery or Little Miss Y's whimsical children's clothes line. Make sure you check out Forêt Féérique as well: we predict a great future for this brand new label (pictured).

► www.fashionforward.be

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GOSSELIN MOVING

BELGIUM - MEMBER GOSSELIN GROUP

♦ Agenda ♦

OdeGand – 12 September

This traditional opening of the Ghent leg of the Festival of Flanders along the city's canals brings classical music buffs together with the city's rowdy youth. Miraculously.

→ www.odegand.be



FLANDERS TODAY
SEPTEMBER 9, 2009



Leuven Draait

STÉPHANIE DUVAL

The festival season might be over, but Leuven still has something up its sleeve. On 18 and 19 September the Leuven Draait Eindfeest, or end party, sends out the summer in a final bash of music, comedy and art.

Young people formed the non-profit Leuven Draait to provide a platform for young creative talent in Flanders, with an emphasis on those from the province of Flemish Brabant, where the small university city is located. Every two years, Leuven Draait will organise a contest in five categories: music, photography, film, cartoon and word.

The first edition took place in 2007; this year enthusiasts were invited to send in their work for consideration for the second time. Every category was deliberated by a specialised jury, and throughout the year, multiple winners in each category are announced. They won prize monies but also workshops or a trip to a festival –

awards to encourage further artistic development.

All 23 winners are also invited to showcase their talents at the Eindfeest. The winners in the photography and cartoon categories are preparing an exhibition that will be unveiled at the historic Molens Van Orshoven. Afterwards, the show will travel to different locations in Leuven. Winners of the music and word categories, meanwhile, will perform live for an audience for the first time. Merrymakers will also get a chance to see the winning movies in the film category. ♦

Last year, more than 1,500 entertainment-seekers came to Leuven to celebrate Brabant's budding talent. They were drawn by the free entrance, no doubt, but also to the energetic, joyful atmosphere and the varied programme.

This year, a few established artists were invited as guest performers. On Saturday, stand-up comedian Seppe Toremans (a member

of the jury in the word discipline) debuts his new show *Cut!*, which is but a warm-up for Sunday, when spoken word artists and DJs liven up the final party of photography, film and cartoons at the Molens. ♦



18-19 September

Saturday: 20.30, Studio Leuven

Sunday: Molens Van Orshoven

→ www.leuvendraait.be

OTHER EVENTS IN LEUVEN THIS WEEK

Circus festival → *across the city*

Leuven carnival → *across the city centre*

Het Depot concert hall launches new season!



Antwerp

Café Capital
Rubenslei 37 – Stadspark;
www.cafecapital.be
SEP 10 18.00 Closing party Bar Jeudi
SEP 12 22.00 Spacid + Diepvries + Tinez

Queen Elisabeth Hall
Koningin Astridplein 26;
0900.26.060,
www.fccc.be
SEP 16 20.30 Engelbert Humperdinck

Borgerhout

Trix
Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00,
www.trixonline.be
SEP 13 19.30 Mr. Big
SEP 15 19.00 Chimaira + Unearth + Throwdown + Daath

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24,
www.abconcerts.be
SEP 14 Brian Blade, Trixie Whitley, Daniel Lanois
SEP 16 Guy Van Nueten

Art Base

Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20,
www.art-base.be
SEP 12 20.00 Jonathan Benisty

Le Bar du Matin

Alsembergsesteenweg 172;
02.537.71.59, <http://bardumatin.blogspot.com>
SEP 10 21.00 Zambramora

Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.226.12.57
Concerts at 20.00:
SEP 9 Matt Elliott **SEP 11** The Luyas + Bell Orchestra **SEP 13** Bonaparte
SEP 14 Scott Matthew **SEP 15** The Pictish Trail + Malcolm Middleton
SEP 17 Tiny Vipers

Roodebeekpark

Roodebeeksesteenweg 314;
02.761.60.15
SEP 19 19.00 Too Much & The White Nots (free)

Deurne

Openluchttheater Rivierenhof
Turnhoutsebaan 232; 070.222.192,
www.openluchttheater.be
SEP 9 20.00 Explosions in the Sky + Krakow

Ghent

Frontline
Overpoortstraat 37; 09.223.22.27
www.thefrontline.be
SEP 15 19.00 Gold Kids + Dead Swans + More Than Life + At Least We Try

Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060,
www.vooruit.be
SEP 10 20.00 Krakow + Shearwater
SEP 14 20.00 Lacrimosa

Koksijde

CC Casino
Casinoplein 11; 058.53.29.86
www.casinokoksijde.be
SEP 12 20.00 Kate Ryan

Leuven

Het Depot
Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03
SEP 11 20.00 Quantic and his Combo Bárbaro
SEP 13 20.00 SMART: Frank Vanderlinden, Anton Walgrave & Mathias Sercu



Bruges

De Werf
Werfstraat 108; 050.33.05.29,
www.ccdewerf.be
SEP 12 18.30 September Jazz 2009
SEP 13 20.30 Sam Vloemans 'Bord du Nord'

Brussels

L'Alphabet
Waversesteenweg 1387; 02.662.23.00,
www.lalphabet.be
SEP 12 20.30 Nelson Trio

Le Bar du Matin

Alsembergsesteenweg 172;
02.537.71.59, <http://bardumatin.blogspot.com>

Musical Instruments Museum
Hofberg 2; 02.545.01.30,
www.mim.fgov.be
SEP 17 12.30 Mid West Quartet (Poland)

Piola Libri

Franklinstraat 66-68; 02.736.93.91,
www.piolalibri.be
SEP 15 19.00 Apero Jazz: Jaloose, Bossa Nova

DON'T MISS

Mig's World Wines Walkabout

12 September
noon to 18.00
Charleroisteenweg
Brussels

This most excellent of wine shops, run by Australian and American ex-pats, hosts the annual Walkabout in its neighbourhood in Sint-Gillis. Ten venues – from art galleries to travel agencies – get in on the act, all offering a specific wine and tasting sheet. There are 50 wines to choose from, and all – wouldn't you know it – can be purchased at Mig's, which has stock from 33 different countries.

→ www.migsworldwines.be



Sazz'n Jazz

Koningsstraat 241; 0475.78.23.78,
www.sazznjazz.be
Concerts at 21.00:
SEP 9 Soho Grant **SEP 10** Rue des Pêcheires **SEP 11** Liza Lee **SEP 12** Fab, blues, hip-hop

The Cotton Club - Grand Casino
Duquesnoystraat 14; 02.289.68.66,
www.gcb.be
SEP 12 22.00 Julie Larousse

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45,
www.themusicvillage.com

♦ Agenda ♦

FLANDERS TODAY
SEPTEMBER 9, 2009

Concerts at 20.30:
SEP 9 The Green Dolphins **SEP**
10-11 Rick Margitza + Ivan Paduart
Trio SEP 12 Phil Abraham + The
 New Look Trio **SEP 16** Joachim
 Caffonnette Trio **SEP 17** Coralee &
 No Trouble Blues Band



Antwerp
Fakkelteater
 Reyndersstraat 7; 03.232.14.69,
www.fakkelteater.be
SEP 16 20.30 Elena Frolova, music
 and poetry (Russia)

Zuiderpershuis
 Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00,
www.zuiderpershuis.be
SEP 17 20.30 Fleurs Noires
 (Argentina/France)

Brussels
Art Base
 Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20,
www.art-base.be
SEP 11 21.00 Larisa Quartet, Latin
SEP 17 20.00 Martin Alvarado, tango

Bozar
 Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be
SEP 11 20.00 Selin: Smadj with
 Ibrahim Maalouf and Talvin Singh
SEP 12 20.00 Munadjat Yulchivea
SEP 13 11.00 Mäshräp Ensemble
 15.00 When We Will Be in Baghdad:
 tribute to Kamel Shaa Abdullah **SEP**
14 20.00 The Silk Road Ensemble
 conducted by Yo-Yo Ma

Café Central
 Borgval 14; 0486.72.26.24,
www.lecafecentral.com
SEP 16 23.00 The Knights of Pi



Antwerp
deSingel
 Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28,
www.desingel.be
SEP 16 20.00 Junge Deutsche

Filharmonie conducted by Susanna
 Mälki, with Marco Blaauw, trumpet:
 Haydn, Zimmermann, Poppe

Bruges
Concertgebouw
 't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02,
www.concertgebouw.be
SEP 11 20.00 Summer Classics
 2009: Flemish Symphony Orchestra
 conducted by Andreas Delfs, with
 Enrico Pace, piano: Mendelssohn,
 Liszt, Brahms
SEP 17 20.00 Jukebox Bernstein:
 Ode to Leonard Bernstein with
 guest dj Fred Brouwers, Bernstein's
 right-hand man Craig Urquhart and
 philosopher Ludo Abicht

Brussels
Ancienne Belgique
 Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24,
www.abconcerts.be
SEP 9 20.00 Franco Saint De Baker
SEP 16 20.00 Guy Van Nueten, piano

Atelier Marcel Hastir
 Handelsstraat 51; 02.657.22.09,
ateliermarcelhastir@gmail.com
SEP 13 20.00 Elisabeth Wybou,
 violin; Frédéric Rouel, piano

Bozar
 Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be
SEP 10 20.00 Swedish Radio
 Symphony Orchestra and Choir
 conducted by Daniel Harding: Verdi's
 Requiem
SEP 11 20.00 Swedish Radio
 Symphony Orchestra and Orphei
 Dráugar choir conducted by Esa-
 Pekka Salonen, with Leila Josefowicz,
 violin: Salonen, Stravinsky. 22.00
 Closing party: DJs and The Dorf,
 jazz/rock (Germany)

De Munt
 Muntplein; 070.23.39.39,
www.demunt.be
SEP 11 20.00 Christianne Stotijn,
 mezzo; Joseph Breinl, piano; Marco
 Borggreve, photography and
 projection: Schoenberg, Brahms
SEP 15 20.00 Com que voz
 by Stefano Gervasoni, fado/
 contemporary fusion conducted
 by Franck Ollu: fado by Amália
 Rodrigues, 16th-century sonnets by
 Luís Vaz de Camões
SEP 17-19 20.00 Concert opera:
 L'Enfant prodigue with De Munt
 Symphony Orchestra and chorus
 conducted by Marc Soustrot

Flagey
 Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20,
www.flagey.be
SEP 10 12.30 Finghin Collins, piano:
 Beethoven, Takemitsu, Schumann.
 22.00 Zodiak Trio, jazz (Germany)
SEP 11 12.30 Ziv Braha, lute; Chiara
 Banchini, violin: Weiss/Bach, Haydn.
 22.00 Bobo Stenson, jazz piano
 (Sweden)

Zinnema
 Veeweydestraat 24-26; 02.555.06.00,
www.zinnema.be
SEP 12 20.00 Chapelle de Lorraine
 conducted by Bert Van Laethem,
 with Ronny Roofthooft, trumpet and
 music and dance students from the
 Muziekacademie Anderlecht: Haydn,
 Peter Warlock (free)

Mechelen
Cultuurcentrum
 Minderbroedersgang 5; 015.29.40.00
SEP 11 19.30 Kariburock: benefit
 concert featuring Rockenbach



Brussels
De Munt
 Muntplein; 070.23.39.39,
www.demunt.be
Until SEP 29 15.00/19.30 Handel's
 Semele directed by Zhang Huan, Les
 Talens Lyriques and De Munt Chorus
 conducted by Christophe Rousset



Brussels
KVS Bol
 Lakensestraat 146; 02.210.11.00,
www.kvs.be
SEP 11-OCT 2 20.00 nieuwZwart,
 choreographed by Wim Vandekeybus
 (with texts in English)

Leuven
Stuk
 Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20,
www.stuk.be
SEP 15-17 20.30 Prayer: A Human

Function, choreographed by Heike
 Schmidt



Antwerp
Fakkelteater
 Reyndersstraat 7; 03.232.14.69,
www.fakkelteater.be
Until SEP 20 20.30 Charlotte,
 directed by Jan Verbist (in Dutch)
Until SEP 26 20.00 De leraar (The
 Teacher), directed by Peter and
 Stefan Perceval (in Dutch)
Until SEP 27 20.00 Den Derby,
 directed by Jos Dom (in Dutch)

Sportpaleis
 Schijnpoortweg 119; 0900.26.06.00,
www.sportpaleis.be
SEP 11-13 Walking with Dinosaurs
 (in Dutch with French surtitles)
www.dinosaurlive.be

Stadsschouwburg
 Theaterplein 1; 0900.69.900,
www.musichall.be
Until OCT 25 The Sound of Music
 (musical, in Dutch)

Theater aan de Stroom
 IJzerenwaag 6; 03.290.60.63,
www.theateraandestroom.be
Until SEP 27 20.30 De
 Fluistercompagnie presents
 Blankenberge by Tom Lanoye (in
 Dutch)

Zuiderpershuis
 Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00,
www.zuiderpershuis.be
SEP 11-13 15.00/20.30 Djelis et
 jongleurs (Storytellers and Artists),
 the meeting of two oral traditions
 from Burkina Faso, directed
 by Charles Cornette and Hilde
 Uitterlinden (in French with Dutch
 surtitles)

Brussels
De Markten
 Oude Graanmarkt 5; 02.512.34.25,
www.demarkten.be
SEP 12 18.00 Breekbaar (Fragile),
 comedy cabaret for all ages
Heule
OC De Vonke
 Lagaalplein 24; 056.24.06.20

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 Hannes: 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

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

Brussels
Argos: Centre for Art and Media
 Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.03,
www.argoarts.org
SEP 15-DEC 19 Actors & Extras,
 contemporary artists explore the
 contrast between the work of actors
 and extras in cinema. Works by Irina
 Botea, Jeremy Deller, Mike Figgis
 and more, plus historic propaganda
 footage

DON'T MISS

**African shapes +
 American stills**

Until 13 September

**Damse Vaart Zuid
 42, Bruges**

Two Bruges-based photographers team up for this show of contrasts. Koen De Vaere's group of photos depicts life in Africa in digital, graphic black and white – a look into a world little known to the outside. Peter De Bruyne's series depicts a lack of life in America in full colour analogue prints that are blurred without being digitally manipulated – illustrating the truth behind the legends of the American west.

www.peterdebruyne.com



SEP 14 13.30 Sarah Hay presents
 Words & Music, ode to Rodgers &
 Hammerstein (in English)



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

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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 Bernar Venet and comic strips about Venet and the art world by Belgian artist Jacques Charlier

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

Costume and Lace Museum

Violettestraat 12; 02.213.44.50, www.brucity.be

Until SEP 29 stoffen & +, textile works

Danish Cultural Institute

Koningsstraat 35; 02.5230.73.26, www.dkibelenlux.org

SEP 11-OCT 22 Urban DK, graffiti art

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

Hallepoort

Zuidlaan; 02.534.15.18

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

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63, www.mjbjmb.org

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

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

Nova Cinema foyer

Arenbergstraat 3;

www.nova-cinema.org

SEP 17-OCT 10 Stephen Tunney (aka Dogbowl), drawings

Recyclart

Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34,

www.recyclart.be

Until SEP 26 Compared to What?, photo exhibition on subculture

Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11,

www.fine-arts-museum.be

Until SEP 27 Rembrandt's Portrait of Nicolaes van Bambeeck, one of the Dutch artist's masterpieces, recently restored and shown with its companion piece, the Portrait of Agatha Bas, on loan from Buckingham Palace

Tour & Taxis

Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49,

www.expo-terra.be

SEP 10-MAR 28 It's our Earth 2: From Kyoto to Copenhagen, interactive exhibition exploring the effect of climate change

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

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

Deurle

Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens

Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23, www.museumdd.be

Until SEP 13 When the mood strikes... Wilfried & Yannick Cooreman's collection of contemporary art, with works by Franz West, Thomas Schütte 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/](http://design.museum.gent.be)

Until OCT 11 Yrjö Kukkapuro, retrospective of the Finnish designer

Until OCT 11 Ceramics by Raoul Duffy (1877-1904)

Until OCT 11 Schoonhoven Silver Award, competition with 55 international artists

MIAT

Minnemeers 9; 09.269.42.00, www.miatsgent.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

Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03,

www.smak.be

Until NOV 15 Raphaël Buedts, 'furniture objects'

Until NOV 22 Nick Ervinck, GNI-RI sep2009 EITOZOR, 3D installations

Until NOV 22 Sculptural Collections, sculpture and installations by various artists

Hasselt

Modemuseum

Gasthuisstraat 11; 011.23.96.21, www.modemuseumhasselt.be

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

Leuven

Museum M

Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28; 016.20.09.09,

www.mleuven.be

SEP 20-DEC 6 Rogier van der Weyden 1400 | 1464: Master of Passions, work by the 15th-century Brussels city painter, the first exhibition in Leuven's new museum

Overijse

Den Blank

Begijnhof 11; 02.687.59.59, www.denblank.be

Until SEP 13 Afgedankt (Discarded), photos of abandoned spaces by Flemish photographer Henk van Rensbergen

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

Zwalm

PNEC De Kaaihoeve

Oude Scheldestraat 16; 055.49.67.96, www.kunst-en-zwalm.be

Until SEP 13 Kunst & Zwalm, 9-kilometre art circuit in the Flemish Ardennes, navigable on foot or bike



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 Bruges Stadhuis and Ooidonk Castle in D deinze 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

Europalia China: Festival celebrating Chinese culture – ancient to contemporary – with more than 450 events

SEP 11-JAN 30 across the country www.europalia.eu

Festival of Flanders: Major annual event encompassing seven festivals across Flanders, with every city staging hundreds of classical and contemporary performances and workshops

Until OCT 30 across Brussels and Flanders www.festivalvlaanderen.be

Aalst

Time as Activity: series of concerts, films and events around the theme of time

SEP 12-NOV 7 at Netwerk: Centre for Contemporary Art, Houtkai 053.70.97.73, www.netwerk-art.be

Antwerp

Ethiopian Blend: Project showcasing Ethiopian culture with concerts, an exhibition, films and debate

SEP 16-27 at Zuiderpershuis, Waalse Kaa 14 03.242.81.11, www.zuiderpershuis.be

The Flying Juniors Day:

Introduction of three young Belgians who will endeavour to fly around the world in their self-built, single-engine aircraft to support the children's charity Amade. Unveiling of the aircraft, plus festival with live music and flight simulator sessions

SEP 12 14.00-18.00 at Groenplaats 0495.62.52.00, www.flyingjuniors.com

Brussels

Bozar Club Contempo

Party time to mark the closing of three exhibitions and the start of Forza Musical!, including a concert by The Dorf and afterparty with DJ Zohra

SEP 11 20.00-3.00 at Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23 02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be

Bruxellons 2009

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FACE OF FLANDERS

Rik Van Steenbergen

If all the "Lions of Flanders" in sport could be assembled in one place, it would need the world's biggest zoo to accommodate them. If asked who are the biggest, people will drop the names of cyclist Eddy Merckx and boxer Jean-Louis Coopman, the adversary of Muhammad Ali.

But of all the *leeuwen*, the undisputed king of the jungle is probably Rik Van Steenbergen.

In cycling, there are hard men, and then there are the Flemish. They are, as any road racer will tell you, even if they've never turned a pedal in Belgium, a breed apart. And among Flemings Van Steenbergen was – maybe still is – a man apart.

Nicknamed "The Emperor of Herentals" after the small village where he was born and raised, he was for 20 years (before the advent of Eddy Merckx in 1969) Belgium's number 1 road cyclist. Record-keepers, STS geeks and followers of his great rival, Rik van Looy, might demur, but Van Steenbergen's legend wasn't just built on results. It was built on sheer force of character, a character many Flemings like to believe sums up their national sensibility – tough, uncomplicated, home-loving, unpretentious. Van Steenbergen was a man capable of excavating a dyke with his bare hands and an old shovel of his dad's (thus saving a village).

It's this as much as the Emperor of Herentals' many racing honours which will be commemorated in Aarselaar on 9 September during the 2009 Grand Prix Rik Van Steenbergen, a hurly-burly, round-the-houses run that attracts big cycling names from Belgium and abroad, measuring themselves against a legend in the sport's heartland.

Van Steenbergen retired in 1966 and died in 2003, but the Grand Prix remembers him every year.

Flemish cyclists don't become superstars by climbing mountains on two wheels – the topography's against them. But their climate and social milieu has over decades produced its own unique challenges for generations of urban and rural riders:



tiny, bone-jarring cobbled tracks in filthy conditions of slanting rain, icy winds and enveloping wheel-squirt, they pant up the vertiginous slopes of the Flemish Ardennes around Geraardsbergen. They constructed an image of themselves, their land and their sport before "image" as we know it had been invented.

For the Tour of Flanders each spring, a fair portion of the province's entire population turns out to watch what is in effect a grown-up schoolboys' bike race, as local heroes hurtle along the streets and alleys they have played in and on all their lives. Simply to find who can do it the fastest.

Never mind if it's for a cash purse or a bag of marbles or extra chocolate sauce on a waffle. Never mind the road, never mind the weather. In fact, the worse the weather, the more heroic the winner.

PAUL STUMP

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



brooddoos →

The holidays are over, at least for the sandwich-maker. No doubt you know someone who knows someone who's trained their kids to get up half an hour early to make their own sandwiches to take to school. From my experience, this seems so improbable that it comes under the category of urban myth.

Advice abounds on how to fill *een gezonde brooddoos* ("bread box") – a healthy lunchbox. Here's a sample of the tips being dispensed. First, a desperate attempt to get kids to eat brown bread: *smeer een dubbele boterham, één kant wit en de andere kant bruin* – spread a double sandwich: one side white and the other side brown.

This seems fraught with snags. Aesthetically, a mess for young minds, and it requires two loaves, most of which will go stale before too long. It also calls to mind the secret running battle I have had for years at the baker's where, when I ask for *een bruin brood*, I get the reply *een grijs?* (a grey), to which I confirm with *ja, een bruin*.

Here's a suggestion on how to make those cheese sandwiches more appetising: *snij de boterham in vierkantjes* – cut the sandwich in squares; *en prik ze op een satéstokje met een druif ertussen* – and prick them on a saté stick with a grape in

between. They will make a pleasing canapé for the playground, though the health and safety aspects of saté sticks have not really been thought through.

Some tips are a bit more down to earth: *stop een yoghurt in de brooddoos* – put a yoghurt in the lunch box; *vul een pittabroodje met sla, geraspte wortelen en blokjes kip* – fill pitta bread with lettuce, grated carrot and cubes of chicken.

From the above you can see that imagination is all you need at 7.15, though this one smacks of deceit: *verpak fruit en rauwe groenten in snoeppapier* – wrap fruit and raw vegetables in sweetie paper; *een druif als een Napoleonbolletje en twee stengels selder als Twix* – a grape as a Napoleon bonbon and two sticks of celery like a Twix.

Here's another suggestion that puts the parent-child relationship at risk: *geef uw kind frietjes mee naar school* – give your child chips (French fries to some of you) to take to school. Hot or cold, you're thinking it's probably something that would cement the bond. However, the advice continues: *van brood, wortel of kaas* – made from bread, carrots or cheese. Chip-size bread, you can just see the tears rolling down the cheeks.

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SHARON LIGHT

Papaya Song

I love Asian food – or at least Western interpretations of Asian food. Full disclosure: I have never been to Asia. But I grew up on (American) Chinese food, and the discovery of Japanese, Indian and Thai cuisine was a revelation.

Then I moved to Belgium.

Although I have found a few favourite destinations when I'm in the mood for something "ethnic" (stay tuned and you will surely read about them), finding something with a bit of kick has remained a challenge. I'm generally a weakling in the spice department, but I do enjoy it when my food packs a pleasant punch.

My best experience was a visit to an Indian restaurant in Brussels. The waiter actually asked if we would like our food spicy or mild – the first time such a question was raised in my Belgian experience. "I heard you were speaking English," he explained. "We don't bother asking Belgians."

So you can imagine my surprise when friends took me to Papaya Song in Ghent. The menu offers a



good choice between meat, fish and vegetarian dishes. However, there are no tiny peppers to indicate a spicy dish, you just need to know your stuff. I went for red curry, a no-brainer at my usual Brussels Thai stop, but this dish was just at the border of my spice capacity. A friend ordered the green curry, which was likewise nearly out of her range. It was a delicious shock for my deprived taste buds.

Our starters were mild – spring rolls and fish cakes – each with its own sweet dipping sauce. We sat outside since the weather obliged, and the terrace was comfortable and quaint, but a bit noisy from the street traffic on the busy Krijgslaan. The interior, though, is lovely, with dark wood tables, red walls and artistic (not tacky) Thai-inspired touches.

The service was unfortunately quite amateur, and, although our starters arrived quickly, we waited an hour for our main course. In their defence, I can say that the waitresses were very friendly and helpful – a quality sorely lacking in the majority of Belgian eateries.

The last word → → →

Tough talk

"The little guy has paid more than enough for this crisis; now it's the banks' turn."

Socialist party chair Caroline Gennez, on proposals to levy a new tax on financial transactions to fill the hole in the federal budget

Viaduct vote

"The democratic support for the Lange Wapper is virtually non-existent in Antwerp, but that doesn't mean we're going to win the referendum."

Campaigner Wim Van Hees, who opposes the proposed viaduct

Breaking out

"I thought you were escaping. Would you like to escape?"

Justice minister Stefaan De Clerck, checking the windows of the cell of an inmate of Bruges prison while posing as a prison guard in the TV documentary Volt. Just hours later, three men escaped in a daring helicopter jailbreak

Wise words

"I made errors of judgement, yes. I wish it could have been otherwise. But I remain philosophical about it." Former KBC boss André Bergen on the banking collapse in which many people lost their life savings