

Comeback Kim 3

With her one-year-old daughter Jada in tow, Kim Clijsters has returned to the tennis circuit in triumph. The 26-year-old working mother from Limburg isn't just winning games – she's also winning hearts across the United States.



Ye Gods! 6

Admire the biggest painting in Flanders (depicting the Gods on Mount Olympus) and step inside a whimsical library toilet. It's all part of a guided tour through the streets of Antwerp organised by Flanders Today and Erfgoed Vlaanderen.



Delirious design . 11

Hold on before you buy that Ikea item that everyone else is snapping up. Brussels is celebrating its creative designers in a festival that includes events in 100 different locations and objects that you won't find in the Swedish megastores.



Coming home

IAN MUNDELL

Amid circuses and princesses, Leuven opens Museum M

Art is coming home to Leuven this week, with the opening of Museum M, successor to the Vander Kelen-Mertens municipal museum. As well as providing a dynamic new space for the best of the city's art collection, Museum M is mounting an ambitious exhibition exploring the influence of one of Leuven's most famous artistic connections, Rogier van der Weyden.

The opening on 20 September is under royal patronage, with Princess Mathilde of Belgium and Princess Máxima of the Netherlands lending the initials of their names to the official ceremony. This entire week, the city hosts a festival

of music and arts, culminating in a circus performance at the museum.

This reflects the broad contribution that curator Veronique Vandekerchove hopes Museum M will make to city life. "It is the biggest cultural house in the city," she says. "We can offer a wonderful building, a lot of public space that is very nice to wander around in, and, of course, we have the heritage of the city, which is rich, and I think not that well known, even among people from Leuven."

➡ continued on page 4



© Malou Swinn

Works of art
represent a common heritage
Dexia is opening
its collection to the public
on 19 and 20 September 2009

See page 13

EU is last chance for Opel Antwerp

ALAN HOPE

Peeters call for scrutiny of German aid package

Last week's announcement by John Smith, the chief negotiator for General Motors, that Opel Antwerp would have to close, met with resistance on one side, and disbelief on the other. As *Flanders Today* went to press, Flemish minister president Kris Peeters was preparing to call in the EU's competition authorities to look into German aid to Opel. Trades unions at the plant, which employs 2,500, saw their hopes of relief dashed on Monday when Magna confirmed Antwerp would have to close, together with the loss of 10,500 jobs across Europe, half of

them in Germany. "We will do everything we can to avoid job losses," CEO Siegfried Wolf said. Peeters will meet with EU industry commissioner Günter Verheugen, and draw special attention to claims made by the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, apparently based on documents delivered to the Commission by Magna and the German government, that Opel Antwerp is more profitable than the Opel plant in Bochum. If that is the case, then the Commission will be encouraged to look into what enticements were offered by Germany to turn Magna against Antwerp. Not

that Flanders is against state aid to industry: in an earlier phase of the situation, Peeters' government was willing to put its hand in its pocket to offer some "sweeteners" to the successful bidder for GM Europe, hopefully with a contribution from the federal coffers. Peeters was reported to have ready a package of up to €500 million of his own to offer to Opel, after the Opel board chairman Klaus Franz stated that Opel Antwerp could be kept open for a price of €200 million.

➡ continued on page 7

CONTENTS

News 2 - 3

- ♦ News in brief
- ♦ Delhaize hits the jackpot with Pixar cards

Feature 4 - 5

- ♦ Leuven's new museum, named simply M, opens at last

Focus 6

- ♦ The restoration of the Hofkamer, and a special offer!

Business 7

- ♦ Opel's future looks bleak unless Europe steps in
- ♦ Belgium gets its competitiveness back, slightly

Arts 9

- ♦ Antwerp literary festival ... times two
- ♦ Works by Elsschot stay in the country

Active 10

- ♦ Take to the streets, it's car-free Sunday!

Living 11

- ♦ September is design month in Brussels ...
- ♦ ... and Antwerp follows suit

Agenda 12-15

- ♦ Four pages of arts and events

Backpage 16

- ♦ Face of Flanders: Hilde Keteleer
- ♦ Talking Dutch: our language expert comes eye to eye with a remarkable receptionist
- ♦ The Last Word: what they're saying in Flanders

News in brief

A court in Ghent has dismissed charges of insider trading in Fortis stocks made against former foreign affairs minister Karel De Gucht and his wife Mireille Schreurs. De Gucht is now a member of the European Commission.

A mother in Herentals has developed a washable tattoo for children in danger of wandering off, featuring the mobile phone number of his or her parents. An Dierickx had the idea after she began writing her phone number on the arm of her son Lothar, who she described as "the Belgian champion of wandering away". Designs are available on her website: www.labelsomel.be

An attack by a Romanian computer hacker on the servers of ING and Dexia banks was "nothing special," according to specialists. The hacker, known as Unu, used an exploit called SAQL Injection, which experts described as "a basic technique". No sensitive data was exposed in the attack. Unu claims to be an "ethical" hacker, and maintains that "the hacked banks should be grateful to me" for exposing important security weaknesses.

The police chief of Brussels West zone (Molenbeek, Ganshoren, Berchem Sint-Agathe, Koekelberg) has been committed for trial on charges of involuntary manslaughter and criminal negligence. Johan De Becker is alleged to have returned the service firearm to an officer who was being treated for depression, and whose gun had been withdrawn. The man later shot dead the partner of a woman he was stalking, and turned his weapon on himself. "He ought to be punished for what he should have done, but didn't do," the victim's parents said.

Belgacom is to go live with its new payment system PingPing by the end of the year, the company announced last week at the World Broadband Forum in Paris. Ping-Ping will allow customers of participating businesses to pay for their online purchases by SMS. Belgacom also announced a cooperation agreement with Ogone, which already handles point-of-sale transactions using Visa, MasterCard and Bancontact.

The number of cases of euthanasia rose in Flanders from 1.1% of all deaths to 1.9% between 1998 and 2007 as a direct result of the intro-

Cards boost Delhaize's market share



Supermarket chain Delhaize this summer saw its market share soar above 26%, thanks to some talking cars, a lost fish and a post-apocalyptic robot. Delhaize attributed the summer success to a combination of fine weather and more people holidaying at home – the so-called staycation.

But those conditions were also enjoyed by the other supermarket giants, Colruyt and Carrefour. The big difference was Delhaize's summer promotion with Pixar, the animation studio. The promotion offered packs of cards with images of the studio's many popular characters – from films like *Toy Story*, *Finding Nemo*, *Wall-E*, *Cars* and the forthcoming *Up*. There is an element of gaming involved, but the cards are essentially for collecting, and children up and down the country went wild about them.

The promotion ends today (September 16), but there's still life in the 210 million cards out there, as children trade their doubles and try to complete their collections. Last week the company organised swap-meets at several locations as the campaign approached its end. "I took the day off work specially," said one father of two. "Every time we went shopping, opening the Pixar cards was the most exciting moment. We're only missing one to make our collection complete."

At one point Delhaize's market share jumped to 26.25%. At the end of June the situation of the top three was: Colruyt 26.28%, Delhaize 25.37%, Carrefour 25.19%.

Since then the situation is likely to have changed, even if the relative positions remain the same.

• In other news, the company is to stop expanding its Delhaize City chain of small city supermarkets, because they were too expensive to run but could not open on Sundays because of the company's agreement with unions. Delhaize's Proxy chain, by contrast, is operated by franchisees who are willing to open on Sundays. Existing City stores will not be closed.



On the cover

Our cover photos is from the 2006 photo series *Cet obscur objet* by Flemish photographer Malou Swinnen, part of the permanent collection at Leuven's new Museum M



FLANDERS TODAY

Independent Newsweekly

Editor: Derek Blyth

Deputy editor: Lisa Bradshaw

News editor: Alan Hope

Agenda: Sarah Crew, Robyn Boyle

Art director: Michel Didier

Prepress: Corelio P&P

Contributors: Rebecca Benoot, Robyn Boyle, Courtney Davis, Emma Portier Davis, Stéphanie Duval, Anna Jenkinson, Sharon Light, Alistair MacLean, Marc Maes, Ian Mundell, Anja Otte, Saffina Rana, Chrisophe Verbiest, Denzil Walton

Project manager: Pascale Zoetaert

Publisher: VUM

NV Vlaamse Uitgeversmaatschappij

Gossetlaan 28, 1702 Groot-Bijgaarden

Editorial address: Gossetlaan 30

1702 Groot-Bijgaarden

Tel.: 02.373.99.09 – Fax: 02.375.98.22

E-mail: editorial@flanderstoday.eu

Subscriptions: France Lycops

Tel: 02.373.83.59

E-mail: subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu

Advertising: Evelynne Fregonese

Tel: 02.373.83.57

E-mail: advertising@flanderstoday.eu

Verantwoordelijke uitgever:

Derek Blyth

duction of a new euthanasia law in 2002, according to a group of researchers from the Free University of Brussels (VUB) writing in the latest issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*. But the increase is unlikely to be permanent, the group led by Professor Johan Bilsen said.

Laurens Verbeke, one of the two programme directors of VTM and 2BE, is stepping down after relations with his co-director, Jan Segers, became unworkable. Sources at VTM spoke of serious differences of vision for the two channels. Verbeke joined the Flemish Media Company, parent company of the channels, in 2006 from independent production house Woestijnvis.

Correction

In last week's edition, our cycle reporting was a little bit wobbly. We referred to the Flemish cyclist Rik Van Steenberghe as "the Emperor of Herentals" after the small village where he was born. Several readers wrote to point out that it was in fact Rik van Looy, his great rival, who came from Herentals and was called the Emperor. Van Steenberghe, who came from Arendonk, was also known as Rik the First, Rik the Great and The Boss, while Rik van Looy was known as Rick the Second. For the record, most Belgian cyclists are known affectionately by their nicknames. Roger De Vlaeminck was The Gypsy, Eddy Merckx was The Cannibal, Johan Museeuw The Lion of Flanders and Brik Schotte The Ironman.



"Nazi" childminder was ignored by government child agency

Family services agency *Kind en Gezin* were last week forced to admit there had been several complaints about a Hoboken child-minder who was secretly filmed expressing her admiration for Hitler while surrounded in her home by Nazi memorabilia.

When the pictures were first released by the VRT's *Terzake* news programme, *Kind en Gezin* said it was not aware of the situation because it had never received any complaints from parents of children at the crèche run by Herta Van den Bempt. At the same time, it emerged that it had received a complaint as far back as 2003 about her "insulting outbursts" aimed at the parents of some children at the school, in particular those of immigrant background. According to one man, whose wife is Jamaican, their child cried all day and remains traumatised. Repeated complaints to *Kind en Gezin* were brushed aside.

The agency later admitted it had received complaints, but claimed there was insufficient evidence to withdraw Van den Bempt's licence. But the *Terzake* film, shot with a hidden camera, showed that the woman has a portrait of Hitler on one wall, a photo of extreme right-wing Flemish militant Bert Eriksen on another and a flag of the Flemish Militant Order displayed in a corner. Witnesses confirm that the emblems have always been there.

In a report made by an inspector for *Kind en Gezin* in February this year, Van den Bempt is reprimanded for her strict policy of putting children to bed for a nap and waking them up at set times. She was also criticised for failing to respect the children's needs, but she responded that although her ways were at odds with the pedagogical principles of *Kind en Gezin*, she had no intention of changing.

Mechelen in state of siege after threat

The city of Mechelen was last week in a state of siege after a message posted to a website seemed to suggest some sort of attack on a school.

The messages read: "293 days to go until I am hero [sic] at KTA lyceum Mechelen, watch the news". It was spotted by a man in Germany on March 11, the day on which a school student in Winenden in Germany shot and killed 12 people.

Federal police here carried out investigations in the US, where the site is hosted, and found that the message was a copy of the same words posted on 13 January. Adding 293 days to that date brings us to September 9.

There is no KTA Lyceum in Mechelen, but there is a KA Lyceum, and on Wednesday last week it was placed under tight police surveillance, with officers posted at every point of entry as well as inside the buildings. At other schools, at main bus stops and at the railway stations, too, the police presence was visible and reinforced. Six helicopters patrolled the skies, and three dog teams were deployed.

"A threat like this is very difficult to estimate," said Mechelen mayor Bart Somers. "Either it's an irresponsible joker who can look forward to receiving the bill if he is ever found. Or it's someone who has the intention of carrying out a grave act. We decided not to take any chances."

Clijsters crowns comeback at US Open

LEO CENDROWICZ

Hoisting her 18-month daughter, Jada, and her silver trophy, Kim Clijsters was a picture of elation. And who could begrudge her? Her US Open victory at Flushing Meadows on Sunday night was one of the most remarkable achievements in women's tennis.

It was not just her second grand slam title, coming four years after a triumph in the same arena. She was the first unseeded and unranked female grand slam champion. And Clijsters became the first mother to win a major since 1980.

Clijsters was a wild card: since coming out of a two-year retirement in March, she had only competed in two tournaments, and had yet to secure a ranking.

The final saw Clijsters beat Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki

7-5, 6-3 in 93 minutes. But her title was marked by her hard-won victories over Venus Williams in the fourth round, and Serena Williams in the semi-final. The latter game descended into farce as Williams, just one point away from defeat, was docked a penalty point for her threatening, profanity-laced tirade at a line judge, and the lost the match without another shot being played.

It could, incredibly, have been even better for Flemish tennis. Yanina Wickmayer, a previously unheralded 19-year old from Diest was just one game away from meeting Clijsters in the final. The teenager, who had not previously progressed beyond the second round of a grand slam event, was only blocked in the semi-finals by Wozniacki.



Kim and Jada share the joy of victory

FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

When Antwerp sneezes

Antwerp and its inhabitants are not all that popular in Flanders. Too loud and too self-confident is how they are seen. The Metropole, as the city on the Scheldt likes to call itself (how's that for self confidence), tends to dominate, not least when it comes to language. For some reason, most TV actors seem to have this slight (or quite heavy) Antwerp accent, even when the story they are in is set on the coast or in Limburg. Love it or not, Antwerp is always interesting to observe, as it often sets the tone for years to come.

When the Flemish green party first saw the light of day, in the 1970s, it did so in Antwerp. There, too, lie the roots of the far-right Vlaams Blok (now called Vlaams Belang). Because of its dense population, Antwerp has more representatives, making it easier for new parties to gain a seat. But the electoral system is only part of the explanation. For some reason, Antwerp city folk have very sharp antennae, picking up the Zeitgeist at an early stage.

When the Vlaams Blok scored 17.7% in the 1988 city council elections, most observers thought that this was a typical Antwerp phenomenon. Three years later, on "Black Sunday," they had to admit their mistake when the Vlaams Blok made a national breakthrough.

The steady rise of the Vlaams Blok/Belang has necessitated another thing, which was also initially considered to be typical of Antwerp only – the broad coalition which includes all the major parties except for VB (which is excluded for ethical reasons). The wide coalition has also moved beyond Antwerp: the previous Flemish government – which included Christian Democrats, liberals and socialists – was exactly that.

The headscarf debate is just another example of how Antwerp leads the way, whether we like it or not. The debate was mostly non-existent in Flanders until things became heated up in Antwerp, resulting in a total ban in public schools across Flanders. "Thank you very much," a Limburg politician of Turkish descent sneered last weekend.

So what will the future bring? Looking at Antwerp, there are not too many signs for optimism.

THE WEEK IN FIGURES

€9.1 million

received last year by the federal exchequer from Belgians who died without leaving a will or living relative, €2 million more than in 2007 and an all-time record

72%

people who find it difficult to keep work and home-life separate, according to a study by employment agency Randstad. Employees carried out private business in the workplace, and took work home. A growing number of people, the study found, have no real work to do, and busy themselves with private phone calls, emails and web-surfing

41%

seldom or never take work home

25%

spend an average of one hour a day working at home

19%

of employees do their shopping during working hours

€42,839

net increase in salary spread over a whole career for someone who has a university degree compared to someone who doesn't, according to figures from the OECD

€89

per month extra earned by graduates, assuming a career lasting 40 years, although the figure is lower for women

€200,000

paid by Sint-Baaf's cathedral in Ghent for 800 chairs by the fashionable furniture designer Maarten Van Severen. The old chairs were no longer comfortable, the rector explained

75

age of Karl Heinz Theisen, who was last week awarded a doctorate in history from Leuven University. Dr. Theisen, described as an "eternal student" despite a career as lawyer and mayor of Prüm in Germany, already has four doctorates, in theology, philosophy and canon law, and has no plans to rest on his many laurels

5,804

calls to the Suicide Line in the first half of the year, in addition to 593 online messages to www.zelfmoordline.be



Coming home

Leuven connects its old municipal museum and its fine arts centre with a bridge of modern design

→ continued from page 1

The building, by the Stéphane Beel firm of architects from Ghent, is quite a change from what was there before. A series of massive white cubes connects the former museum on Savoyestraat to the old Academy of Fine Arts on Leopold Vanderkelenstraat, in places towering over the narrow streets. The main entrance is now through the columns of a neo-classical portico that has been dramatically grafted onto the new building, while within the complex, space has been made for a garden.

From the outside, Museum M does not hide that it is made up of buildings from different eras and with distinctive styles. Inside, however, there is a coherent arrangement of floors running through the whole complex.

Pride of place on the ground floor goes to the permanent collection, 500 items from around 46,000 that have come into the hands of the city over the years. The first room, with locally-produced sculpture from the 15th and 16th centuries,

planets." The calendar is the only known example of its kind. "You have it in manuscripts, in 'books of hours', but it's the only one that we have where all 12 months are gathered on one panel."

What is most striking here, though, is the collection of paintings depicting the Passion of Christ, the events leading up to the crucifixion. "People liked to identify themselves with his misery, with his pain, and so these images were very popular," Vandekerchove says. "They were in homes, in private chapels, in churches and in monasteries, and they were really objects of veneration."

The permanent collection then jumps to the 19th century. There are two rooms devoted to the faces of Leuven – both people and cityscapes – and a significant collection of work by the Belgian painter and sculptor Constantin Meunier. "He lived and worked in Leuven for 10 years, which is why we have a lot of plasters from his workshop," explains Vandekerchove. Having been tucked away in city hall, this is the first time they are being publicly exhibited.

"It took him 10 years to finish, and we have lots of correspondence from the city asking when it would be done, and from Meunier complaining that his workshop was flooded"

immediately brings home how the new design shows off the art.

Rows of figures carved in wood form an aisle, leading up to a tall altarpiece depicting the life of Mary and Jesus in 12 carved alabaster panels. Originally in a Leuven monastery, the fragile panels have now been restored and re-assembled. "It's the first time that we've had a space big enough to show it," says Vandekerchove.

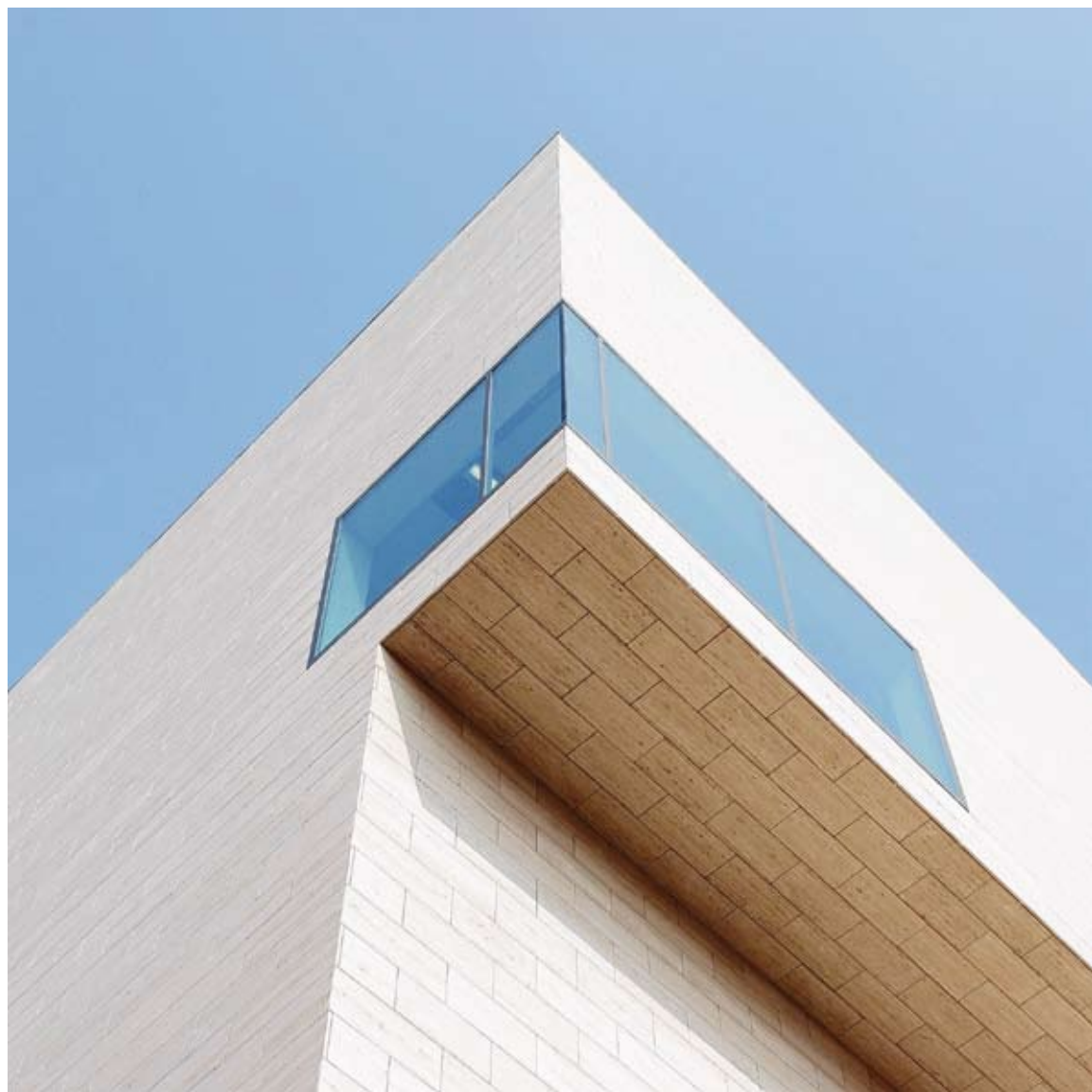
Leuven's significant production of stained glass and textiles during this period is explored in the next room, before attention turns to paintings. Two highlights are a Trinity from the workshop of Rogier van der Weyden and a painted calendar that was made as a sort of advertisement for a local clock maker.

"It represents the 12 months of the year, but it was also a clock," Vandekerchove explains. "You have the 24 hours of the day, and there used to be an arrow indicating the hours, but not the minutes. There was also an instrument that indicated the situation of the

It was in Leuven that Meunier lost both of his sons, and it is easy to read his sorrow into works created here, such as a statue of the prodigal son. Meunier's sombre paintings of workers and farmers are complemented with more romantic visions of 19th-century Flanders painted by Frans van Leemputten.

Meunier is also the subject of the museum's first "dossier" exhibition, where one work is selected from the collection and displayed with documents that tell its story. In this case it's a picture called "The Flood of Leuven", which Meunier painted in return for workshop space from the city. "He didn't really want to paint it, and you can tell," says Vandekerchove. "It took him 10 years to finish, and we have lots of correspondence from the city asking when it would be done, and from Meunier complaining that his workshop was flooded."

The collection is rich with stories like this, and further impressions of 19th century life can be seen



The new Museum M incorporates ultra-modern design into the architecture of the previous municipal museum

in the rooms of the old museum, which are being restored to their period decoration and will house a selection of silver, ceramics and textiles.

With its temporary exhibitions, Museum M intends to mix ancient and modern. "We will always try to combine old art and new art because our experience is that contemporary artists like to be inspired by their predecessors," says Vandekerchove.

So alongside the van der Weyden exhibition are existing and new works by the Flemish artist Jan Vercruysse. "We think that his work makes a nice dialogue with the work of van der Weyden," she says. "Vercruysse combines things that are not really part of everyday life and gives them a new meaning."

→ www.mleuven.be

20 September-6 December

Museum M
Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28
Leuven

→ www.rogiervanderweyden.be

EXHIBITION

The passion of Rogier

Rogier van der Weyden was born in Tournai around 1400 and in 1435 was appointed city painter in Brussels. But it was for Leuven's Crossbow Guild that he produced "The Descent from the Cross", a masterpiece which is now among the most prized possessions of the Prado in Madrid. It is an astonishing work, with a sensation of depth and palpable emotion that was revolutionary at the time and still stops people in their tracks.

"With van der Weyden, theatricality is very important," explains Lien De Keukelaere, who coordinated the first temporary exhibition at Leuven's Museum M alongside curator Jan Van der Stock. "It's the first time that real figures show emotions. You see them weeping."

This is a significant difference from Jan van Eyck, the other major Flemish painter of the time, and proved popular with contemporary artists and their patrons. "You see that the work of van der Weyden is picked up far more, and that this emotion and these themes that he created were copied a lot more than those of van Eyck. This lived on through the entire 16th century."

One of the aims of Rogier van der Weyden: Master of Passions is to draw out these connections and show how the painter's work started trends and was copied, first through his own studio and then by other artists. Sometimes subjects are reproduced, such as images of St Luke drawing the Madonna or a particular staging of the crucifixion. In other cases, it is the arrangement of figures or their postures, such as the swooning Madonna from "The Descent" held up by the people gathered at the foot of the cross.

One of the most fascinating aspects of this exhibition is the way in



From the permanent collection:
 “Women in the Tobacco Manufacturer of Seville” by Belgian painter and sculptor Constantin Meunier, who lived and worked in Leuven for 10 years

“Head of Megaera”, Greek deity of envy and infidelity, a rare example of a papier mâché head that survived French interference in the 19th century

15th-century sculptures from the tomb of Isabella of Bourbon, second wife of Charles the Bold, show direct influences of Rogier van der Weyden



van der Weyden

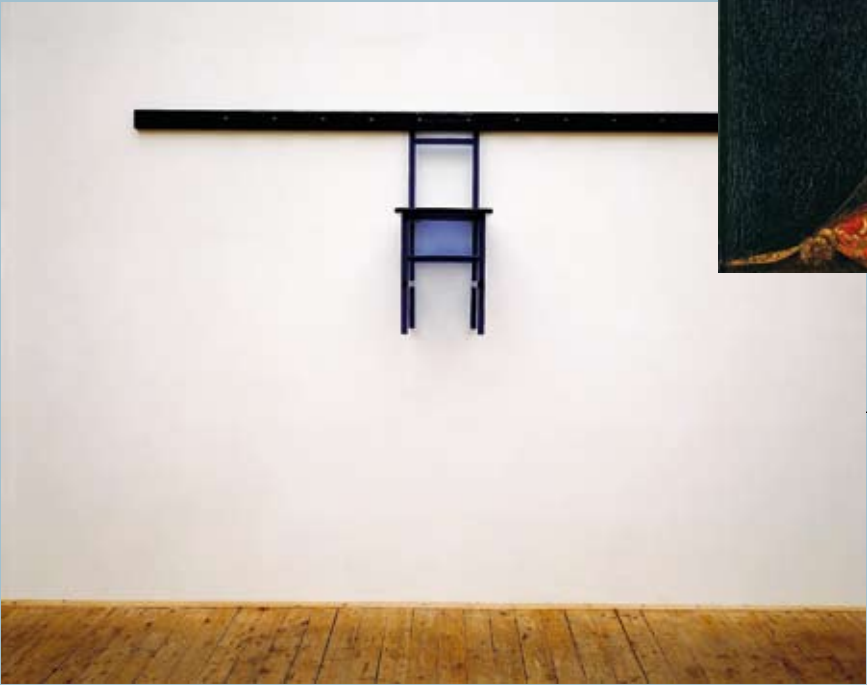
► which it makes links between the painted work for which van der Weyden is most famous and media such as sculpture and textile. Some of the most striking pieces on show are wooden carvings, of exceptional quality, which take on themes from the paintings or are thought to have been produced to van der Weyden’s designs.

“The Descent” is too valuable to be moved from the Prado, so the Leuven exhibition has had to find other ways of including it. A video installation by Walter Verdin explores the dynamics of the original, and there is also a 15th-century copy that remained behind in Leuven when the original left for Spain in the 16th century.

Other requests to borrow work have been more successful, and the exhibition reunites altarpieces whose component panels have been scattered for decades. One particularly fine example involved borrowing five panels from four different collections around the world.

The most spectacular items open and close the exhibition. The first is a massive tapestry, copied from wall paintings van der Weyden designed for the Brussels town hall, which were destroyed by French bombardment of the city in 1695. The tapestry copies have not left Switzerland for centuries. And at the end of the exhibition is the newly restored “Seven Sacraments” altarpiece that belongs to the Fine Arts Museum in Antwerp.

A Madonna and Child by van der Weyden



Modern meets master: From the “Tombeaux” series by Flemish artist Jan Vercruyse, who is shown alongside 15th-century painter Rogier van der Weyden. Museum M will feature dialogues between contemporary artists and old masters



LISA BRADSHAW

The Gods of the Hofkamer

It could be years before Mount Olympus towers above our heads again

If you peek to the side at just the right moment, you can see the Hofkamer building through the portico that leads to the beautiful courtyard in the middle of the offices of Erfgoed Vlaanderen.

You might remember the Hofkamer, one of the complex of buildings called Den Wolsack in Antwerp's Oude Beurs street, from headlines last year when "The Gods on Mount Olympus" was removed from the ceiling of the building, where it had hung for nearly 240 years. The largest single painting on canvas in Belgium, Erfgoed Vlaanderen (Heritage Flanders) is having it restored, along with the entire building.

You might also remember the headlines a few months later when, under restoration in the large reception of the nearby ING

bank, part of the painting fell over, leaving a tear five metres long. "It was a nightmare," says Bart Jonckheere of Erfgoed Vlaanderen, who is heading up the restoration project. He's able to smile while he says it now, but it was a different matter before, as the legal and technical ramifications of the accident delayed the project for six months.

Now it's back on track, headed up by Belgian restorer Hugo Vandendorpe, and will be completed as early as the end of this year. But then it just has to sit and wait.

The Hofkamer building is also undergoing renovation, and work continues at the same pace as money is raised. "The best-case scenario is three years," says Jonckheere. "The worst case, 10 years." When it's ready, the paint-

ing can "go back up on the ceiling for the next 240 years," he laughs.

"The Gods of Mount Olympus" is a remarkable example of *quadratura*, a tradition in Rococo art that gives the illusion of an arch shape or an open sky. Measuring 65 square metres, one end of the rectangle shape seems to meld seamlessly into the fireplace at the end of the room. The 32 gods, goddesses and other divinities sit among the clouds, many staring upwards towards Zeus. (An interactive computer programme located both in the Hofkamer and in the ING bank offers a tutorial on many of the painting's characters from Greek mythology.)

The painter – or rather the painters – is unknown. "We know there is more than one painter because there is a difference between the architectural motifs and the figures," explains Jonckheere. "The architectural motifs are of better quality."

Completed in 1772, the painting was commissioned by François Adrien Van den Bogaert, a rich merchant "who wanted to impress his colleagues," says Jonckheere. He must have done because he completely renovated the entire Hofkamer, which was originally built in the 16th-century, with an entirely new facade, boasting fantastic Rococo architecture. At the same time a clock was being installed by the Van Hoof family



© Stefan Dewickere

in Antwerp's cathedral, another by the famous clock-making family was being installed on the Hofkamer.

Its gold face flanked by *putti*, the clock is topped by an armillary sphere, a miniature representation of the universe – a touch meant to prove that Van den Bogaert was an educated man of the world. He also seemed to have a sense of whimsy, as evidenced by his "library toilet". In the upper story of the Hofkamer, he employed the style used in some French castles of hiding his porcelain bowl behind fake book fronts. But he went a few steps further – the walls of the small WC are lined by fake book shelves of wood and leather. It is unique in the world.

This is one of the many reasons why the Hofkamer is a protected monument under the aegis of Erfgoed Vlaanderen, whose job

it is to see to the upkeep of 13 of Flanders' protected monuments. Some of the others are the Fort Napoleon in Ostend, the Beauvoorde Castle in Veurne and the Horst Castle in Holsbeek. They maintain the historical buildings and oversee their activities. It's also their job to increase awareness of Flanders' heritage sites, which means they are also the organisation behind Open Monument Day, which was last weekend in Flanders.

Erfgoed Vlaanderen receives half of its operating costs from the Flemish Region. The other half comes from rents from businesses located in its properties, guided tours and, of course, private donations. Visit the website to see how you can help support protected monument in Flanders. ♦

→ www.erfgoedvlaanderen.be



Bart Jonckheere in the Hofkamer's infamous "library toilet"

© Wim Kempenaers

1 October, 18.00: The Hofkamer Den Wolsack and "The Gods on Mount Olympus"

On Thursday, 1 October, Flanders Today teams up with Erfgoed Vlaanderen to offer guided tours in English. You'll see the Hofkamer building, hear the legend of the "book toilet" and find out just how they managed to take "The Gods on Mount Olympus" down from the ceiling and get it out the door. The tour continues to the ING building for a viewing of the painting, an explanation of restoration techniques and (of course!) food and drink.

To join the 90-minute tour, send an email to editorial@flandersday.eu with "English tour" in the subject line. Limited to the first 50 respondents (two people per email), who will be asked to pay the €5 fee in advance.

Tour the Hofkamer with Flanders Today!



"The Gods of Olympus" ceiling painting (above) and the front of the Hofkamer Den Wolsack on Antwerp's Oude Beurs (top)

© Stefan Dewickere

Opel “not dead and buried” say unions

→ continued from page 1



Kris Peeters (left) and Günter Verheugen (right)

“There are reliable studies which show that Antwerp scores better than factories in Germany,” Peeters said. “Those reports should be made public as quickly as possible.”

On Sunday, federal foreign minister Yves Leterme had an informal meeting with the 27 EU trade ministers to raise the issue. He also held more detailed talks with the ministers from Germany, Spain and Hungary – all three countries which have GM plants on their

territory. They have an interest in ensuring that Germany's interests are not the only ones being considered.

The United Kingdom also has a stake in the issue. Former trade commissioner Peter Mandelson told BBC Radio at the weekend that the British government looked to the Commission to ensure fairness. “Our Vauxhall plants at Ellesmere Port and Luton are highly efficient and I am sure, and we insist, that this be recognised,” he said.

The objections to the German aid to Opel are based on three main elements in the EU's rules:

- The business in question must be independently viable, which is clearly not the case for Opel. State aid is not allowed if its aim is to prevent a company from going bust. According to at least two experts, under its current form, the new Opel is likely to be facing bankruptcy in 2010 or 2011, even if the aid is paid.

- It is not permitted to grant state aid to keep open a particular unit or operation. “I think it is important to say that the Commission should not accept any linkage between aid and retention of jobs in any specific plant or country,” Mandelson told the BBC.

- The amount of the loan granted by the state should not be more than the salary costs of the company. In the case of Opel, the €4.5 billion on offer is about double last year's total wages bill for the company.

According to Vic Heylen, a former Commission adviser on aid to the car industry and now a specialist with Flanders Centre for Automotive Research, the decision to abandon Antwerp is based on changes made in 1998, when the UK government attracted production of the Opel Vectra to Ellesmere Port with aid that was then approved by the EU. That left Antwerp in a vulnerable position as a single-model factory, producing only the Astra. Economist Geert Noels, on the other hand, blamed Antwerp's weak position on a lack of competitiveness, with wage costs in Belgium now higher than in Germany – the reverse of the situation in the banner years of the 1980s.

Unions, meanwhile, remain upbeat. “Opel Antwerp is not dead and buried yet,” said ABVV head Herwig Jorissen. “We'll see how the Antwerp factory can survive. I don't want to give away too much about our negotiations, because we still have a long way to go. But we're not in the ground yet.” ♦

Belgium more competitive

Belgium has jumped one place – from 19th to 18th – in the table of economically-competitive countries, according to the annual Global Competitiveness Report produced by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

Belgium's rise, however, is partly due to the poor situation in some other leading countries, rather than any spectacular record here. South Korea dropped from 13 to 19, allowing Belgium to move up. Belgium did gain points for its healthcare system and primary education – where it ranks third worldwide. Other plus-points were higher education, training and infrastructure, but the country scored less well for government debt, efficiency of the labour market and tax burden.

Belgium's banks, on the other hand, plummeted from seventh place last year to 95th in a ranking of financial stability. That places the country below the US (which has dropped from 40 to 108), the Netherlands (6 – 70) and the UK (44 – 126).

Switzerland leads the list of competitive countries, with six European countries – Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands – in the top ten.

The same countries – those six together with the US, Singapore, Japan and Canada – continue to dominate the top of the table, in fact, with the only change in their relative positions.

The WEF rankings were drawn up from a survey of around 12,600 business leaders in 133 countries, covering a variety of topics of importance to business. Burundi came last, after Mali, Chad and Zimbabwe. ♦

→ www.eforum.org



© shutterstock

Flanders throws money to the winds

The Flemish government's investment agency PMV has agreed to pump €15 million into Electrawinds, the Ostend-based green energy company. The capital injection is not destined for any specific project, managing director Luc Desender said.

Electrawinds is already, by its own account, the largest privately-owned renewable energy group in the country. With investments in wind, solar and bio-mass energy, the company now has a production capacity of 200 megawatts (mW), and ambitious plans for growth. According to Desender,

capacity could be up to 500 mW by 2011.

The PMV money may not be ring-fenced, but the agency is displaying a clear interest in wind energy. Out of three major investments in renewable energy projects made by the PMV in the last six months, two have been to companies – Electrawinds and Belwind – who are deeply involved in the production of wind energy in the North Sea. Belwind is the project to build a wind farm on the Bligh bank off the North Sea coast. The third recipient was the Antwerp-based Thenergo, a developer and

operator of projects using biogas, bio-oil, natural gas, wood biomass and secondary fuels.

Electrawinds' additional capacity will come from new wind farms, including the Eldepasco project in which supermarket chain Colruyt is a participant. In June this year Electrawinds won the concession for the development of the fourth wind farm to be established in Belgian waters.

The PMV meanwhile said its latest injection of funds was a strategic investment, in line with the PMV's decision to make green energy a priority for investment. ♦

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Autos • D'Ieteren

Car rental and distribution company D'Ieteren has invested €275 million to increase its stake in Belron, which specialises in car windscreen replacement. D'Ieteren formerly held 77%, but now owns 94%.

Beers • Award

Three Flemish beers won awards at the recent Hong Kong International Beer Award ceremony. The traditional Lindemans Framboise was voted the best fruit beer, while Hoegaarden white beer and the Delirium Tremens also won awards.

Chemicals • Solvay

The chemical and pharmaceutical company Solvay is to invest €160 million to acquire a majority stake in the Bereznikovski Sodovi Zavod soda ash plant. The factory is Russia's third largest in the sector with a capacity of some 500,000 tonnes a year. The Brussels-based firm already owned a small part of the company, but is keen to expand the activities of the plant, which employs some 2,200 workers in the Urals area. Meanwhile, Solvay's Dutch vaccine production facility in Weesp has been given the green light to begin producing a vaccine against the H1N1 swine flu virus.

Retail • Delhaize

Delhaize, the country's second largest retailer, last week inaugurated a new 12,000 square metre distribution centre. The facility, built at a cost of €50 million, is located in Zelkik. The company plans to open several discount Red Market stores over the next few months to take on market leaders Colruyt and Aldi. Meanwhile, the group has been named as a potential takeover target by the Dutch Ahold retailing group.

Retail • Dreamland

Dreamland, the toys, multimedia and school supplies distributor, has opened its first store in France, near Roubaix. A second opening is planned near Douai in the coming months. Dreamland is affiliated to the Colruyt discount group.

Textiles • Subsidies

The European Union will pay up to €9.2 million from its Globalisation Adjustment Fund to Flemish textile workers made redundant because of the large influx of textiles from developing countries such as Brazil, India, China and Turkey.

Telecom • Option

Leuven-based telecommunication equipment company Option is to supply up to 100,000 third generation telephone modules for the new Nokia Booklet 3G, the mini laptop expected to hit the market shortly.



All you need to know about banking services on arriving in Belgium

**Take advantage of our ING Expat Convenience Services
+32 2 464 66 64 - expat@ing.be - www.ing.be**

Many banking services are available to expatriates living in Belgium but there is nothing you need to know about making such arrangements. That's a task for the ING Convenience Services experts.

Your bank accounts and cards can be ready for you the moment you arrive in Belgium. ING's Expat Services have 40 years of experience to help make your stay in Belgium as financially smooth as possible.

ING 

The lit lovers

REBECCA BENOOT

Journalists, professors and ordinary readers come together in Antwerp for two of the region's best literary festivals



© Katrin Van Giel/Beiga

Quintessentially Flemish: Walter van den Broeck

The days are getting noticeably shorter. Soon the winds will be blowing and rain will be falling — perfect, then, for a cup of hot cocoa and a good book.

But where to start? Never was the phrase “so many books, so little time” as relevant as it is now. In order to help you make your autumn selec-

tion, may I suggest you find time in the coming weeks for not one but two literary festivals in Antwerp.

On 20 September, you'll find the 10th edition of *De Morgen* newspaper's *Zuiderzinnen*: Festival of the Word. This year the theme is “*Moeder, waarom lezen wij?*” (*Mother, Why Do We Read?*), referring to the classic 1932

Flemish novel *Moeder, waarom leven wij?* (*Mother, Why Do We Live?*).

Each year, a variety of authors, actors and even musicians head to the south of Antwerp to entertain, educate and surprise using the simplicity and power of words. This year's theme has the participants going back to where it all started, the books of their youth that made them want to keep reading.

Although the heart of the operation will be Antwerp's trendy Zuid neighbourhood, countless locations will host interviews, debates and bittersweet performances by Flemish and Dutch authors such as Bart Moeyaert, Christoph Vekeman, Erwin Mortier, Joke van Leeuwen, Pia de Jong and one of this year's Golden Owl winners, Robert Vuijsje.

Flemish folk singer Raymond van het Groenewoud kicks it all off with a concert in the city's Royal Museum of Fine Arts. The museum, along with the Permeke library, will host a second-hand and antiquarian book fair. A programme especially designed for kids in the Steiner School finds authors like Marc de Bel and Marc Tijsmans showing kids the fun and fantastical world of fiction.

The other festival, the other book

Two weeks later, *Het andere boek* (The Other Book) will head in an entirely different direction — abroad. The goal of this festival, still flourishing after 33 years, is to get up close and personal

with both local and international writers. Readers get the chance to meet contemporary greats in intimate interviews, readings and debates.

Fiction, poetry and non-fiction are equally feted at this intellectually stimulating adventure. This year, the Balkans, Iran, the Great Lakes of Africa and even the suburbs of Edegem will show a way of life at once completely foreign and surprisingly familiar. Subject matter is eclectic, to say the least, ranging from Darwin to Islam with both the First and the Second World Wars somewhere in between.

This festival, which, at its heart, honours the authors behind the books also gives you the chance to poke around the latest releases at the many retail booths.

Some highlights of this year's event: American investigative journalist Andrew Rice gives a talk on murder and memory; Lisa Appignanesi, director of the Freud Museum in London and author of *Mad, Bad and Sad: A History of Women and the Mind Doctors*, leads a discussion on psychoanalysis; and the Kurdish award-winning poet Baban will be interviewed by Flemish poet and journalist Bart Stouten.

Closer to home, Flemish writer Tom Lanoye will present his latest novel *Sprakeloos* (Speechless); Leonard Nolens reads from his famous diaries and Walter van den Broeck debuts his new novel *Terug naar Walden* (Back to Walden). ♦

From tower to pasture

The bizarre road trip of Walter van den Broeck

Walter van den Broeck is a legend of Flemish letters: his oeuvre of plays and novels includes the 1,000-page *Het beleg van Laken* (The Siege of Laken), which earned comparisons to Hugo Claus' *The Sorrow of Belgium*. He'll talk about his new book *Terug naar Walden* (Back to Walden) on 4 October during *Het andere boek*.

Terug naar Walden is “about downfall — the highs and the subsequent lows,” says Van den Broeck. “The protagonist decides to take his revenge on capitalism after some very bad news from his doctor. In one simple sale, he initiates an economic crisis that causes financial institutions to crumble. He decides to leave the Marsh Tower in New York, guided by a voice that leads him down a turbulent road to his final destination — a pasture in the Antwerp Kempen.”

Like any good road book, the central character makes a number of remarkable acquaintances, says Van den Broeck, who was born and bred in the Kempen, including “a man who sells 9/11 souvenirs, two retired interrogators from Guantanamo and a 12-year-old girl, who ultimately helps him realise the error of his ways.” Another of the book's characters is Frederik van Eeden, a real-life influential Dutch author who became one of the key figures in the Dutch literary movement against Romanticism towards the end of the 19th century. He was also famous for creating Walden, an agricultural colony near Bussum in the north-west of the Netherlands. Besides being a reference to Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, this colony also played a vital role in the evolution of socialism in the Low Countries and is the symbol for a simple, community-oriented lifestyle. “I

just try to give voice to all the horrors that we have to deal with through a story with a very unique atmosphere,” says Van den Broeck.

Considering the state of the current economy, *Terug naar Walden* couldn't wish for a better release date. Although it wasn't the author's intention to base the novel in this reality, he says it's a natural outcome of his “artistic antennae. I often sense things a lot sooner than other people.”

Although Van den Broeck frequently writes about the Belgian royal dynasty, they are completely left out of the picture this time, except for one brief reference to the late King Boudewijn. His normally strong autobiographical references are also in short supply. “This time, I've had to put ‘myself’ on hold,” he says. “However, when you

place the name of the protagonist beside mine, you'll soon realise that this book isn't about me, it is me. You could then say then that this is my most autobiographical book to date.”

Van den Broeck appreciates the audience of *Het andere boek*. “These people are really interested in literature with a capital L and in thought-provoking non-fiction. A lot of journalists, professors and students attend. It's not like the Boekenbeurs in November where you have to get past a lot of cookbooks and celebrity stories before you find what you are really looking for.” ♦

ELSSCHOT ARCHIVES FINALLY PUBLIC

Had he not died before it launched, Willem Elsschot would have been just the sort to relish a literary festival like *Het andere boek*. An advertising exec by day and writer by night (under a pseudonym), his droll novels about the struggles of ordinary people in business and at home walked a beautifully fine line between popularity and critical appeal.

Elsschot, who published his last book in the 1940s, is one of a handful of Flemish novelists translated into English (*Cheese, Villa des Roses*). His archives, which were scattered around over the years, were painstakingly pursued by his daughter, who died last week at the age of 91. Now the finally complete archives will be housed at the Letterenhuis, or House of Literature, in Antwerp, the largest literary archive in Flanders. This means they will be open to students and other researchers — and part of a huge public exhibition next year.

Lisa Bradshaw

→ www.letterenhuis.be

Zuiderzinnen

20 September, 13.00-20.00
Across Antwerp

→ www.zuiderzinnen.com

Het andere boek

3-4 October, from 11.00
Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaai 14, Antwerp

→ www.hetandereboek.com

Breathing space

Get on your bike. Brussels and Antwerp are holding car-free days this Sunday

EMMA PORTIER DAVIS

Imagine a day without traffic jams, honking horns and exhaust fumes tainting the air. Luckily, what is often just a fantasy for anyone spending time in Belgium's cities will be a reality on Sunday 20 September when Brussels and Antwerp celebrate car-free day.

Cars will be banned and citizens encouraged to use alternative transport such as buses, trams, bicycles and even their feet. There will be street parties, horse parades, live music and a host of other activities which would all be impossible with cars on the roads.

Previous years saw a holiday atmosphere descend across the cities as people took to the streets en masse, going for a bicycle ride along the car-free boulevards - "I love zipping up the middle of the streets," said cycling enthusiast Paul Kaye - or for a meander across usually perilous streets.

"I take my bike, travel around to see the concerts, and go to the park. It's easier and safer on the roads. It's also less noisy and the air is not so polluted. With all the people out cycling and walking around and enjoying the festivities, it's a really cool atmosphere," said Beatriz Irala.

For the daredevils among you, a high-speed trip through the dark and mysterious empty tunnels on rollerblades is also highly recommended, though not strictly legal.

Environment and health

Car-free days are great for the environment and for our health. Anyone unlucky enough to spend part of their working day in the Brussels European quarter will know it's definitely not a choke-free zone. The same goes for the poor souls stuck on the truck-congested roads near Antwerp port.

Passenger cars account for about 12 percent of Europe's emissions of global warming gas carbon dioxide (contributing to the potentially devastating effects of climate change) and chuck out asthma-inducing nitrous and sulphurous oxides.

According to Brussels Mobility, the impact on the environment should be felt immediately. Last year's car-free day resulted in a reduction in noise levels to 10 decibels below that usually seen on a Sunday while there was three to four times less fine particle dust.

Levels of nitrous oxide otherwise known as laughing gas (although it doesn't have a very funny impact on the environment with its intense global warming effect), dropped ten times below the normal weekday emissions on Brussels' Wetstraat, a main artery of the city.

Concentrations of carbon monoxide, a highly toxic gas, were ten times lower than a normal Sunday and three to four times lower than a week day. In the tunnels, the drop was even sharper with levels falling 48 times below those seen on a normal Sunday.

Cars are often more trouble than they are worth. Brussels Mobility said 25 percent of journeys made in the city are less than one kilometre. Even for a slow walker, that's about 15 minutes. Three out of five journeys are shorter than five kilometres and easily done by bike.

Finally, if environmental concerns are not convincing, the health benefits should be: "What is rarely taken into account is how much better off we would be taking physical activity rather than sitting in traffic getting all stressed," said an EU official.

Traffic accidents in Belgium resulted in 922 deaths last year. Countless studies have shown that noise pollution from vehicles causes hearing problems, stress, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and strokes.

Environmentalists are happy with the result. Nonetheless, one day a year is not going to do much towards Europe's goal to cut carbon dioxide emission by one fifth by 2020 and reach air quality targets, often exceeded in Belgium due to its dense population and heavy car use.

According to European Commission data, EU transport emissions are projected to increase 1.4 percent annually, potentially wiping out emission reductions made in other areas. This would leave us with runaway climate change as well as myriad car pollution-related illnesses.

For Brussels, which is host to several European institutions, to do its bit, environmentalists said it should hold a car free day during the week so workers would be forced to investigate alternative means of transport.

"It's a good thing that it shows us how pleasant the city is without cars around but it stays in our spare time. People don't imagine they can use



their bike to go to work and they don't make the link with changing the transport system," said Friends of the Earth campaigner Jeroen Verhoeven.

To be fair, Brussels will also observe the Europe-wide car-free day on September 22, calling for people to find alternative modes of transport to take their children to school. But anything bolder than that is unfortunately likely to cause an uproar.

"Politically it is much easier to enforce a car-free day on a Sunday and easier for the population to accept; otherwise there are complaints about worker hours lost and the effect on the economy," said Jérôme Matagne from Transport Week.

Both cities however have several schemes to reduce traffic such as car sharing, car pooling, taxi sharing, and bicycle sharing. There have also been moves to increase the offer of public transport and make it easier for cyclists.

Schlepping up Kunstberg on your way home from a hard day at the office is hardly enticing but the authorities plan to install a bike lift on this ferociously steep hill and have drawn up maps showing people lower gradient routes.

At an EU level, there are intense dis-

cussions about how best to improve public transport and alternatives to cars but, say environmentalists, this needs to be stepped up in Belgium. After all, it is home to the European institutions.

Nonetheless, all agree that car-free days are an all-round good idea. "It

shows the whole population what the world would be like if we arranged it differently and didn't rely so much on cars," said cycling enthusiast Kaye. "I can't imagine anyone not enjoying the lack of pollution, traffic and noise." ♦

➔ www.weekvanvervoering.irisnet.be

Party without cars

Antwerp's car-free day celebrations pretty much last all weekend. From Friday 18 until Monday 21, there will be a gazillion reasons to leave your car behind and explore the city by other means of transport, from bikes to boats, and from climbing ropes to sky lifts.

The theme for this year's car-free day (the 14th in Antwerp), is The Land, The Water, The Air. The idea is for citizens to get around by all possible modes of transport except for cars.

Water babies can enjoy a trip around the harbour, Europe's second largest, a literary cruise culminating in a tour of a book market, or just

watch the sea scouts' regatta on the Scheldt.

Braver types might want to take a trip in one of the Sky-watches, a vertiginous 60 metres-high lift which gives a view over the city. If that's not exciting enough, try the Death Ride in Steenplein.

If you prefer terra firma, you'll be glad to hear the city is organising a cycling or rambling tour of four kilometres (great for the kids).

Die-hard cyclists can join in a 45-kilometre cycling route, which combines a tour of the city and the surrounding countryside.

➔ www.antwerpenautovrij.be

Design mania

Brussels introduces design to the masses this month

What is it with autumn that makes everyone obsess over design? Perhaps we are collectively preparing for the cold and dark months to come, when it's easier to sit at home if you're surrounded by beautiful things.

In case the new IKEA catalogue – which just dropped – doesn't satisfy all your aesthetic needs, Design September is god-sent.

Since 2006, the entire city of Brussels has bathed in a design-themed atmosphere for three weeks during September. Nearly 80 events are planned at 100 different locations, making for an action-packed programme. Design September not only acknowledges that "design" is a broad denominator, it addresses it quite creatively. Everything from furniture, objects and industrial products to graphic design and architecture is well represented. Those who want a taste of everything, better clear their schedules.

Festival of design

Design September bears a close resemblance to a festival. Design fans celebrate their shared love of artfully constructed objects and products, in a manner much more fun than any given art or design fair. While going from one location to another, visitors also get an eyeful of a Brussels they probably haven't seen before.

Exhibitions are held at museums, galleries and in the Brussels Royal Academy of Fine Art, so, by visiting any number of the events, you'll get a unique view on the different places where design feels at home. To make things easy, the arts centre-cum-club Recyclart offers visitors a handy map, which takes you on a walk through Brus-



sels, passing through public events Recyclart has coordinated, among other entertainments.

The stand-outs

Of the many choices, I suggest you don't skip the Young Belgian Lighting Designers exhibition at Septante-Sept, which is your chance to discover home-grown talent and the beautiful boutique where they tend to find their first support.

More Belgian design can be found at the Architecture Museum La Loge, where the nominees of the Dynamo Belgian Young Design Awards showcase their inspired creations.

For Belgian design with an Italian touch, head over to the Espace Bizarre to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Arne Quinze's Primary

Pouf 01. Two Italian architects living and working in Belgium, Susanna Campogrande and Anna Termitte, have designed an installation dedicated to Quinze and to Milan.

Finally, we wouldn't want you to miss the guided tour of the Plasticarium on 26 September. Though the contents of this museum may not be 100% Belgian, its owner most definitely is. Philippe Decelle has collected thousands of plastic pieces over the years, from various decades, designers and brands. Belgians are mostly unaware of this museum, and unjustly so. The collection offers a broad overview of the potential of plastic, and its owner is downright plastic passionate.

Blurring borders

But wait, there's more. One very popular aspect of Design September is the designer open doors – where designers open up their studios to the public. Getting a tour by a local designer lets you get beyond the objects to the process and the person.

This year, architects are also opening their ateliers, thus successfully blurring the lines of a more rigorous definition of design.

That definition didn't work for POParchitects to begin with. Their offices fit within the structure of the multidisciplinary SNAPstudio, which lends a framework to different projects in art and design. "Architecture can't limit itself to its own area of exper-

tise; it has to be a combination of activities," explains Nicolas Coets of POP.

In September in Brussels, design even spreads to your plate. The Food & Wine Academy invited several restaurants to offer special menus, inspired by Belgian glass manufacturer Durobor's industrial design for verrines – savoury foods or desserts served layered in a glass.

Obviously, Design September is not just about looking (or eating) but also learning. Belgian designer Charles Kaisin, for instance, guides visitors through the exhibition on his work from the last 10 years, focusing on two themes: movement and recycling. New York-based Karim Rashid holds a conference at the end of the month, which will pull in design freaks of all types. His work, though young and modern, is legendary. With more than 3,000 furniture and object designs, plus landmark interior designs, he's raked in about 300 awards and still finds time to dabble in music, art and fashion. His views will surely give an idea of how creative design can cross any border. ♦



Us, too Antwerp jumps on the design bandwagon

This month, the design microbe spreads beyond Brussels. A.Track will take over Antwerp for three days this month beginning on 24 September. Fifteen design boutiques open their doors, and a luxurious BMW 7 series shuttle service takes you from one shop to the next.

Among those shops is Ligna Recta, where you can discover the wonders of a kitchen on different levels. Not only will German manufacturer bulthaupt present three new models, but top chef Jacques Slap whips up some Italian food right on site – served with wine, natch. At Ivo de Groot Exceptional Interiors, meanwhile, guests will be treated to a spectacular cooking session and have the opportunity to meet Italian designer Marco Gorini.

At Donum, one of Antwerp's most beautiful design shops, Belgian designer Xavier Lust will be put in the spotlight – live on Thursday night, when he will talk about his work and sign his book. An exhibition of his designs remains all weekend. Another good stop is Fritz Hansen, where American architect and author Michael Sheridan put together an extensive overview of Arne Jacobsen's work.

And if you want to meet French designer Jean-Marie Massaud (Designer of the Year 2009), head over to Kaaidesign, where one of his "Flow" chairs will be raffled off among the visitors.

Prizes, food, chic transport and design: Antwerp may just steal Brussels' show – for a few days at least.



Bisazza, number 1 on the A.Track parcours

A.Track

24-26 September
Across Antwerp

➡ www.atrack.be





Elles tournent

SAFFINA RANA

"Director's cut" takes on a whole new meaning at this year's Elles Tournent, a festival of films by women directors. Two of the most stunning films on offer look into bodily alterations in different parts of the world.

In *Beperkt Houdbaar* (Perishable), Dutch journalist and mother Sunny Bergman worries about her sagging bum, the post-natal weight that hasn't shifted and the encroaching wrinkles of her mid-30s. In a quest to feel better, she submits herself to the scrutiny of workmen who no longer whistle at her, a host of beauty experts and a cosmetic surgeon in America.

What emerges is not a feel-good makeover but an alarming exposé of the beauty industry and the manipulation of her insecurities and the insecurities of those she meets – most notably, a 15-year-old obsessed with the shape of her genitalia. The teenager is enticed by the surgeon to have a surgical alteration on camera, in order to meet the costs.

Beperkt Houdbaar is coupled with *Rough Cut*, a short, beautifully crafted documentary from Iran

by Firouzeh Khosrovani. Rich in irony, it provides an insight into how shopkeepers cope with meeting the needs of the headless, handless, breastless or otherwise incomplete mannequins required by law to display women's clothing. The mutilations undertaken on shop mannequins is enough to make you wince.

The festival's programme is also rich with lyrical films encompassing everything from the sacred to the profane, from work and social pressure to the complexities of war and love. Although they are all made by women, they are not films just about women: *Nacht vor Augen* (Night Before Eyes) by Brigitte Maria Bertele tells the story of a traumatised German soldier's return from Afghanistan to his Black Forest family, especially his relationship with his younger brother.

The five-day event screens 62 films from around the globe and features the latest offerings from celebrated filmmakers such as Pipilotti Rist and Jane Campion (*The Water Diary*, photo above). This second edition spotlights 27 new Belgian films, includ-

ing those of the young Flemish directors Saddy Choua, Anne Smolar, Nina Nijsten, Catherine van Gastel & Saar Van Eyck. And if you're hankering for the old, a selection of the British Film Institute's silent suffragette comedies and newsreels from 1899 to 1917 will screen in collaboration with Cinematek.

Many of the directors will discuss their films with the audience, and D-Janes will spin the decks until dawn at the festival's Faster Pussy-cat party on Saturday night. ◆



17-21 September

Le Botanique and Cinematek
Brussels

Some subtitling in English,
check programme for details

→ www.ellestournent.be



Antwerp

Café Capital

Rubenslei 37 – Stadspark; www.cafecapital.be

SEP 18 23.00 Kamping K, 90s clubbing
SEP 19 22.00 Ame + Morning Factory

Queen Elisabeth Hall

Koningin Astridplein 26; 0900.26.060, www.fccc.be

SEP 16 20.30 Engelbert Humperdinck
SEP 22 20.30 Chris de Burgh

Borgerhout

Trix

Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00, www.trixonline.be

SEP 16 20.00 Pierced Arrows
SEP 17 19.30 The Sedan Vault + Tomàn + Daily Bread + Kazuamsumaki + Spleen
SEP 19 20.00 Fake Problems + Kevin Seconds + Mike Scott
SEP 20 20.00 Chuck Prophet & The Mission Express + Franz Nicolay
SEP 23 20.00 The Whisptown 2000

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique

Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24, www.abconcerts.be

SEP 16 Guy Van Nueten

De Markten

Oude Graanmarkt 5; 02.512.34.25, www.demarkten.be

SEP 20 Salon Dansant with Radio Modern
SEP 24 12.30 Attic Sweat

Fuse

Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89, www.fuse.be

SEP 19 23.00 Dave Clarke, Deg. Pierre

Halles de Schaerbeek

Koninklijke Sint-Mariastraat 22b; 02.218.21.07, www.halles.be

SEP 19 20.00 Archive

Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.226.12.57

Concerts at 20.00:
SEP 17 Tiny Vipers SEP 19 Dirty Projectors + Sunset Rubdown SEP 20 Scarlet Soho + Zoot Woman + Ohbijou SEP 22 Josh Tillman + Carl + Dananananaykroyd
SEP 24 Les Nuits du Soir: Dan San, Hong Kong Dong, Lucy Lucy, Madensuyu, Yoko Sound, Piano Club

Roodebeekpark

Roodebeeksesteenweg 314; 02.761.60.15

SEP 19 19.00 (free concert) Too Much & The White Nots

Ghent

Frontline

Overpoortstraat 37; 09.223.22.27 www.thefrontline.be

SEP 20 19.00 Maudlin + Khuda + An Emerald City + Archivist

Mechelen

Cultuurcentrum

Minderbroedersgang 5; 015.29.40.00

SEP 19 20.00 Krakow + Postman

Meise

GC De Muze

Brusselsesteenweg 69; 02.272.00.29, www.demuzevanmeise.be

SEP 19 20.00 Myrddin

Ostend

Kursaal (Casino)

Monacoplein 2; 070.22.56.00

SEP 19 20.00 Engelbert Humperdinck



Bruges

De Werf

Werfstraat 108; 050.33.05.29, www.ccdewerf.be

SEP 18 20.30 Fly

Brussels

L'Alphabet

Waversesteenweg 1387; 02.662.23.00, www.lalphabet.be

SEP 19 20.30 Mind Priority

Le Bar du Matin

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

SEP 17 21.00 Scallymatic Orchestra

Musical Instruments Museum

Hofberg 2; 02.545.01.30, www.mim.fgov.be

SEP 17 12.30 Mid West Quartet (Jazz Hoeilaart)

Piola Libri

Franklinstraat 66-68; 02.736.93.91, www.piolalibri.be

SEP 22 19.00 Andrio/Brindisi Duo

The Cotton Club - Grand Casino

Duquesnoystraat14; 02.289.68.66, www.gcb.be

SEP 19 22.00 Marie de Condé

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45, www.themusicvillage.com

Concerts at 20.30:

SEP 16 Joachim Caffonnette Trio
SEP 17 Coralee & No Trouble Blues Band
SEP 18 Jan de Haas latin quintet SEP 19 The Swing Dealers
SEP 22 Siân Pottok

Ghent

Charlatan

Vlasmarkt 6; 09.224.24.57, www.charlatan.be

SEP 17 22.00 Bluesbroeders, Guido Belcanto & Willy Willy

Mub'Art - Brasserie MSK Gent

Fernand Scribedreef 1; 09.221.44.89, www.mubart.snauwaert.net

SEP 17 20.00 Bart Quartier and Tuur Florizoone Duo

Jezus-Eik (Overijse)

De Bosuil

Witherendreef 1; 02.657.31.79, www.debosuil.be

SEP 24-26 Jazz Hoeilaart, festival of young international jazz musicians

Mechelen

Stadsschouwburg

3 Keizerstraat; 015.29.40.00; www.ccmechelen.be

SEP 20 13.00 Jazzathome 2009: musical performances in people's homes and around the city. Followed by a concert at 20.00 by Tuesday Night Orchestra

Zottegem

Kasteel van Egmont

Heldenlaan 1; 09.364.64.11, www.zottegem.be

SEP 24 20.00 Carte Blanche

MORE FILM THIS WEEK

Tin Drum Trilogy → *Beursschouwburg, Brussels* →

The Millenium Festival → *Flagey and Vendôme, Brussels*

Leuven Draait → *Molens Van Orshoven, Leuven*





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
Concerts at 20.30:
SEP 17 Fleurs Noires (Argentina/France)
SEP 18 Rocio Bazán, flamenco
SEP 19 L'Orchestre Poly-Rythmo de Cotonou (Benin)

Brussels

Art Base

Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20, www.art-base.be
SEP 17 20.00 Martin Alvarado, Argentinean tango
SEP 18 20.00 Sandip Chatterjee & Carlo Strazzante, classical Indian and Oriental music

Café Central

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

Théâtre Molière

Naamse Poortgalerij - Bolwerksquare 3; 02.217.26.00, www.muziekpublieque.be
SEP 18 20.00 Juan Carlos Caceres, Argentine tango
SEP 19 20.00 Klezmer night: Di Galitzyaner Klezmerim (Poland)



Antwerp

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28, www.desingel.be
Concerts at 20.00:
SEP 16 Junge Deutsche Filharmonie conducted by Susanna Mälkki, with Marco Blaauw, trumpet: Haydn, Zimmermann, Poppe, Hindemith
SEP 18 Jukebox Bernstein: ode to Leonard Bernstein with guest dj Fred Brouwers, Bernstein's right-hand man Craig Urquhart and philosopher Ludo Abicht
SEP 19 Terpsycordes Quartet with Cédric Pescia, piano: Schubert, Bloch, Haydn
SEP 24 Jörg Widmann, clarinet with Guido de Neve, violin; Didier Poskin, cello; Bojan Vodenitsjarov, piano: Widmann, Messiaen

Queen Elisabeth Hall

Koningin Astridplein 26; 0900.26.060, www.fccc.be
SEP 19 15.00 Royal Flemish Philharmonic conducted by Eivind Aadland, with Aldo Baerten, flute: Bernstein, Sternefeld, Mendelssohn

Bruges

Concertgebouw

't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02, www.concertgebouw.be
Concerts at 20.00:
SEP 17 Jukebox Bernstein: ode to Leonard Bernstein with guest dj Fred Brouwers, Bernstein's right-hand man Craig Urquhart and philosopher Ludo Abicht
SEP 18 20.00 Markus Groh, piano: Liszt, Brahms
SEP 20 15.00 Kryptos Kwartet with Hanna Drzewiecka, Elisabeth Wybów; violin, Vincent Hepp, alto violin; Anthony Gröger, cello

SEP 24 20.00 Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin: Strauss, Mahler

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique

Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24, www.abconcerts.be
SEP 16 20.00 Guy Van Nueten, piano

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be
SEP 18-20 15.00/20.00 Belgian National Orchestra conducted by Walter Weller, with Arabella Steinbacher, violin: Mendelssohn's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra No 2, op 64, Mahler's Symphony No 5
SEP 20 11.00 Aurélie Franck, soprano; Laurianne Corneille, piano: Poulenc, Debussy, Boesmans, Bernstein
SEP 24 20.00 Liège Philharmonic conducted by François-Xavier Roth: Handel, Haydn, Holst, Matthews

De Munt

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39, www.demunt.be
Concerts at 20.00:
SEP 17-19 Concert opera: L'Enfant prodigue. De Munt Symphony Orchestra and chorus conducted by Marc Soustrot, with singers Measha Brueggengosman, Andrew Richards, Werner Van Mechelen

Ghent

De Bijloke Muziekcentrum

J Kluyskensstraat 2; 09.233.68.78, www.debijloke.be
SEP 19 20.00 Brussels Philharmonic conducted by Michel Tabachnik, with Ilse Eerens, soprano: Mahler, Gabrieli.
SEP 24 20.00 deFilharmonie, conducted by Philippe Herreweghe with Yossif Ivanov, violin: Mozart, Beethoven

Mechelen

Cultuurcentrum

Minderbroedersgang 5; 015.29.40.00
SEP 19 10.30 B-Five, recorder ensemble: Volta Bianca by Hans-Jürg Meier

Meise

GC De Muze

Brusselsesteenweg 69; 02.272.00.29, www.demuzevanmeise.be
SEP 20 20.00 Prometheus Ensemble: Haydn, Kurtág



Antwerp

Vlaamse Opera

Frankrijklei 1; 070.22.02.02, www.vlaamseopera.be
SEP 19-OCT 3 15.00/20.00 Wozzeck by Alban Berg with the Flanders Opera Symphony Orchestra conducted by Martyn Brabbins, and Choir conducted by Yannis Pouspourikas, staged by Guy Joosten with Gabriel Suovanen, Noëmi Nadelmann

Brussels

De Munt

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39, www.demunt.be
Until SEP 29 15.00/19.30 Handel's Semele staged by Zhang Huan. Christophe Rousset conducts Les Talens Lyriques and De Munt Chorus, with singers Jeremy Ovenden, Nathan Berg

Works of art represent a common heritage Dexia is opening its collection to the public

On 19 and 20 September 2009, Dexia will unveil an exceptional art collection – the largest Belgian private art collection – to the public.



The Central Story, René Magritte

DEXIA

Visit by signing up on www.dexia.be
Free entry between 10:00 and 16:30.
Boulevard Pachéco 44, 1000 Brussels.

Dexia Banque SA, Boulevard Pachéco 44, 1000 Bruxelles – RPM Bruxelles TVA BE 0403.201.185 – CBFA 19649 A – MAE 4944.

Deinze**Ooidonk Castle**

Ooidonkdreef 9; www.ideefixe.be
SEP 17-19 21.00 Verdi's Aida performed outdoors; conducted by Giuliano Betta and Eric Lederhandler, directed by François de Carpentries

**Antwerp****deSingel**

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.48.48, www.desingel.be
SEP 18-19 20.00 Tribe: 4 faces/4 boxes, performance concert combining dance with rock, noise, electronic and acoustic music

Brussels**Halles de Schaerbeek**

Koninklijke Sint-Mariastraat 22b; 0900.26.060, www.halles.be
SEP 23 19.00 Fly Girl, choreographed by Marie Caroline Hominal + Cie Daniel Lineham in Not About Everything
SEP 24 20.30 La Ribot in Llamame Mariachi

KVS Bol

Lakensestraat 146; 02.210.11.00, www.kvs.be
Until OCT 2 20.00 nieuweZwart, choreographed by Wim Vandekeybus (with texts in English)

Kaaithheater

Saintelettesquare 20; 02.201.59.59
SEP 17-27 15.00/20.30 De Munt, Kaaithheater and Rosas in The Song, dance performance by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, Ann Veronica Janssens and Michel François (Belgian première)

Leuven**Stuk**

Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20, www.stuk.be
Until SEP 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, staged 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, staged by Jos Dom (in Dutch)

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)

Bruges**Cultuurcentrum**

't Zand 34; 050.44.30.60, www.concertgebouw.be
SEP 19-20 15.00 Villanella and Het Geluidshuis in Mieke Maaike's Obscene Kapsalon, staged by Tom Van Dyck (in Dutch)

**Aalst****Network: Centre for Contemporary Art**

Houtkaai; 053.70.97.73, www.network-art.be
Until NOV 7 Time as Activity: video art and installations by international artists on the theme of time

Antwerp**Cathedral of Our Lady**

Handschoenmarkt; 03.213.99.51, www.dekathedraal.be

[dekathedraal.be](http://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

Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)

Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60, www.muhka.be

Until NOV 8 Lonely at the Top, art from remote Central Asian Republics

Until FEB 26 Collectie XXIV: presentation of the museum's permanent collection, following a major renovation of the museum

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

Mode Museum

28 Nationalestraat (03.470.27.70)
SEP 17-FEB 21 Delvaux: 180 Years of Belgian Luxury, history of the Belgian luxury leather goods house, famous for its hand crafted bags

Rockox House

Keizerstraat 12; 03.201.92.50, www.rockoxhuis.be

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

Blankenberge**Cultuurcentrum Casino**

Zeedijk 150; 050.43.20.43, <http://cultuur.blankenberge.be>

Until OCT 4 Masereel en de zee (Masereel and the Sea), retrospective on the 120th birthday of the Blankenberge-born Franz Masereel, with drawings, wood cuts, paintings and ceramics

Bruges**Arentshuis**

Dijver 16; 050.44.87.11, www.brugge.be

Until SEP 27 The Museum of Museums 2009, intervention by contemporary artist Johan van Geluwe

Brussels**Archief en Museum voor het Vlaams Leven te Brussel**

Arduinkaai 28; 02.209.06.01, www.amvb.be

Until OCT 31 Herinnering & Migratie.

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

Tegan and Sara (c.15)

30 November, 20.00

Ancienne Belgique, Brussels

These 20-something twins out of Vancouver, BC, Canada will bring a band along with them to Brussels, but they don't really need them: their raging guitars and voices are enough to get alt rock and pop fans jumping up and down to their incredibly catchy tunes and clever lyrics, such as "I feel like I wouldn't like me if I met me".

→ www.abconcerts.be



Erfgoed van nieuwe Brusselaars: films, official documents, texts and poems record the experience and heritage of Brussels' immigrants

Argos: Centre for Art and Media Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.03, www.argosarts.org

Until DEC 19 Actors & Extras, contemporary artists explore the contrast between the work of actors and extras in cinema, with works by Irina Botea, Jeremy Deller, Mike Figgis and more, plus historic propaganda footage

Atomium

Atomium Square; 02.475.47.72, www.atomium.be

Until SEP 20 Atomium 58: 14 visions, the Belgian landmark seen by Belgian and international illustrators

Belvue Museum

Paleizenplein 7; 02.511.44.25, www.belvue.be

Until SEPT 20 Be-Arts, works by Félicien Rops, Hugo Claus, Henri Blès and Rik Wouters

Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten) Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be

Until JAN 3 Portraits of Artists: 80 Years of the Centre for Fine Arts in Pictures, photographs of celebrities from Bozar's files: portraits of Horta, Prokofiev, Magritte and Léger, among others

City Hall

Grote Markt; 02.279.64.35, www.brussel.be/artdet.cfm/4440

Until SEP 27 The Brussels Epic of Willy Vandersteen, works by the Flemish comic-strip artist (part of Brussels BD Comic Strip festival)

Costume and Lace Museum

Violettestraat 12; 02.213.44.50, www.brucity.be

Until SEP 29 stoffen & +, textile works

Danish Cultural Institute

Koningsstraat 35; 02.5230.73.26, www.dkibenelux.org

Until 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

Fondation pour l'Architecture Kluisstraat 55; 02.642.24.80, www.fondationpourlarchitecture.be

Until OCT 18 De tijd van de boetiek (The Time of the Boutique), 200 years of shop windows and interiors

Hallepoort

Zuidlaan; 02.534.15.18

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

Horta Museum (Winter Garden)

Amerikastraat 25; 02.543.04.90, www.hortamuseum.be

Until OCT 31 Jean-Charles Detallante, sculptures

ISELP

Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70

Until OCT 17 Véronique Poppe: Human Capital, paintings; Françoise Joris, ceramics; Bénédicte Monaville, jewellery

Jewish Museum of Belgium

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

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

MIVB Headquarters

Koloniënstraat 62; 02.515.20.52

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

Magritte Museum

Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.36.81, www.musee-magritte-museum.be

New monographic museum dedicated to the Belgian Surrealist René Magritte

Musical Instruments Museum

Hofberg 2; 02.545.01.30, www.mim.fgov.be

Until OCT 11 Alan Lomax in Italy

GET FLANDERS TODAY IN YOUR LETTERBOX EACH WEEK



Want to keep in touch with Flanders?

Simply fill in the subscription form below and send it to:

Flanders Today

Subscription Department

Gossetlaan 30 – 1702 Groot-Bijgaarden – Belgium

Fax: 00.32.2.375.98.22

Email: subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu

The newspaper version will be mailed to subscribers living in any of the 27 countries of the European Union. Residents of other countries will receive a weekly ezine.

**Free
subscription!**

Name:

Street:

Postcode:

City:

Country:

e-mail:

Privacy policy: We fully respect Belgian legislation on the protection of personal information. The data we collect will only be used for distribution of publications and will not be disclosed to any third parties without express consent.

'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?, an group photo exhibition about 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
Until MAR 28 It's our Earth 2: From Kyoto to Copenhagen, interactive exhibition exploring the effect of climate change on the natural world

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.347.30.33, www.wiels.org
Until DEC 6 Ann Veronica Janssens: Serendipity, installations by the contemporary Belgian artist

World Bank Brussels

Marnixlaan 17; 02.552.00.32
Until OCT 31 In the Eyes of a Woman: Roma Portraits, the lives of various Roma communities seen through the eyes of female photographers.

Ghent

Design Museum

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

MIAT

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

Museum of Fine Arts

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

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 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

Mechelen

Speelgoedmuseum (Toy Museum)

Nekkerspoelstraat 21; 015.55.70.75, www.speelgoedmuseum.be
Until JAN 3 Thirty-five years of Playmobil

Tervuren

Royal Museum for Central Africa

Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11, www.africamuseum.be
Until JAN 3 Persona: Ritual Masks and Contemporary Art, masks from the museum's and other collections, shown alongside works by contemporary African artists

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



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
Until JAN 30 across the country www.europalia.eu

Festival of Flanders: Major annual event encompassing seven festivals across Flanders, with dozens of cities staging hundreds of classical and contemporary performances and related events
Until OCT 30 across Brussels and Flanders www.festivalvanvlaanderen.be

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

Antwerp

Ethiopian Blend: A Zuiderpershuis project showcasing Ethiopian culture with concerts, an exhibition, films and a debate
SEP 16-27 at Zuiderpershuis, Waalse Kaai 14 03.242.81.11, www.zuiderpershuis.be

Brussels

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

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

Car-Free Day: Annual car-free day as part of European Mobility Week. All 19 communes of the capital will be closed to traffic except for certain streets; Entertainment and activities across the city
SEP 20 9.00-19.00 in Brussels 02.204.14.43, www.semainedelamobilite.irisnet.be

Design September: Annual festival of contemporary architecture and multi-disciplinary design, with more than 80 events: exhibitions, talks, screenings, an urban design trail, design market and a weekend of Open Doors in designers' studios
Until OCT 2 in venues across the city 02.349.35.95, www.designseptember.be

Elles Tournent: Second edition of the only Brussels international film festival dedicated entirely to films made by women, featuring 62 films from five continents, plus debates and opportunity to meet the filmmakers
SEP 17-20 at Le Botanique, Koningsstraat 236 02.226.12.57, www.ellestournent.be

Folklore September: Folkloric activities with local groups

representing Bolivia, Ecuador, Poland and Catalonia
Until SEP 20 in the city centre www.brupass.be

Marni Jazz: Annual jazz festival showcasing creative jazz with an infusion of Latin, bebop, hip-hop and contemporary music
Until SEP 17 at Théâtre Marni, Vergniestraat 25 02.639.09.80, www.theatremarni.com

Medieval Festival: Activities for all the family include a market, concerts, exhibition, horse riding, jousting and fancy dress competitions, plus fireworks on Saturday at 22.00
SEP 18-20 at Abdij van Vorst, Sint-Denijsplein 9 02.370.22.40, www.vorst.irisnet.be

Plastic: Group art show plus performances and DJ and VJ sets. Music by Loco Dice, Martin Landsky and Phonique, art by Ottmar Hörl, Denis Meyers, Le Nord Elektronik, Space Paf Paf, 13 Pulsions, among others
Until SEP 26 20.00 at Gésu Church (opposite the Botanique), Koningsstraat 171 www.bamboolaprod.eu

Saint-Jazz-ten-Noode: Free jazz festival featuring Maracujazz, Thierry Crommen 4tet, L'Âme des poètes, Nathalie Lories 4tet, and Toine Thys Hammond Trio (Jazz Station)
SEP 19 at Sint-Joostplein with a closing concert at Jazz Station, Leuvensesteenweg 193 02.733.13.78, www.jazzstation.be

Ghent

Vistival: Free concerts by Casino Cuba, De Portables, Marsh Harrier, Rauw & Onbesproken, The Nice Guys and DJs, plus children's entertainment, restaurant and Cava bar
SEP 19 in the Visserij area www.myspace.com/vistivalgent

Knokke-Heist

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

Leffinge (Middelkerke)

Leffingeleuren: Outdoor music festival featuring The Streets, Das Pop, Black Box Revelation, Sunset Rubdown, Ziggi & The Renaissance Band, Dinosaur JR, Daan, Lady Linn & Her Magnificent Seven, The Bony King of Nowhere and more
SEP 18-20 in the centre of Leffinge 059.700.822, www.leffingeleurenfestival.be

Mechelen

Contour2009: Fourth biennial of the moving image, with media installations by Belgian and international artists. This year's theme is Hidden in Remembrance is the Silent memory of Our Future
Until OCT 18 on a walking circuit of 12 venues in the historic city centre 070.22.28.00, www.contour2009.be

Puurs

Pukema Rock: Outdoor music festival featuring Selah Sue, The Clement Peerens Exploitation, Novastar, The Hickey Underworld, De Heideroosjes, Zita Swoon, Arno, Arsenal, Shameboy, Bart Peeters and more
SEP 18-20 at the festival grounds in Puurs (Antwerp province) www.pukemarock.be

CAFE SPOTLIGHT

EMMA PORTIER DAVIS



Het Goudblommeke in Papier

55 Cellerbroersstraat-Brussels

A surrealist, a literary genius and an art dealer walk into a bar...that's the set-up for Het Goudblommeke in Papier, a bar that's bursting at the seams with character and curios.

Even still, it's easy to miss, situated on a dull stretch from downtown Brussels to the Grote Zavel. But once you've whiled a few hours away there, you'll be making it a regular haunt as did leading lights of Belgium's art scene.

The bar, which dates back to the 1800s, housed surrealist painter Rene Magritte's first exhibition long before he was famous. It welcomed Georges Remi (Hergé), creator of Tintin, and, after the Second World War, became the drinking hole for Belgian members of the 1950s art movement CoBrA.

Writer Hugo Claus, a member of CoBrA, celebrated his first marriage here. It's easy to see why this bar was so popular with such types. The walls of this teeny place, decorated by one-time owner and art dealer Geert van Braeme, are jam-packed with paintings and artefacts dating back centuries.

Van Braeme's motto, a parting shot on the back page of the menu, is that every man has a right to 24 hours of liberty a day, encapsulating the free spirit of the bar.

But it's not just for art lovers. Beer connoisseurs also take note: this is the only bar in Belgium that sells Oude Beersel lambic. There's also something special on the gastronomy front : exclusive pralines made with lambic-based cherry beer. It's worth ordering a hot drink just for the pleasure of one of these.

I'll leave the final word to Magritte, who left the following message above the door: *Ceci n'est pas une musee, on consomme*. This is not a museum, we drink.

→ www.goudblommekeinpapier.be

DON'T MISS

Europalia TeaTasting

From 17 September

Dynasty Building, Brussels

Europalia China begins this week with tea tastings at the Tea House installed in the Dynasty building on the Kunstberg in Brussels. The epicentre of the five-month long festival celebrating Chinese art and culture promises to be here, with brochures and catalogues, leaflets and posters guiding you through the wide variety of events. It's also the venue for a series of intimate concerts, lectures and calligraphy workshops, not to mention film screenings and cooking events. Best of all, it's the place to stop for a soothing cup of tea, to watch a genuine tea ceremony or to taste authentic Chinese food.



© Laurence Mounan

→ www.europalia.be

FACE OF FLANDERS

ALAN HOPE

Hilde Keteleer

Hilde Keteleer has spent years working on behalf of writers who've become political prisoners. She debuts her own first novel this month

Hilde Keteleer is a member of that elite group of book translators – it's the literary world's most crucial and most thankless job.

"I started out as an ordinary translator, working mainly in the social and cultural fields," she explains. She soon got involved in the Flemish literary magazine *Deus ex machina*, translating fragments by German writer Julia Franck, which led to more German, and eventually French, literary translation.

"It's very hard for a Flemish person to break into the market," she says. This is largely because all of the big Dutch-language publishing houses are in Amsterdam, but also "books have to be translated into standard Dutch," she explains, "which for a Flemish person requires two steps – from the original language to our own language, which is Flemish, and then into standard Dutch."

Things are different for the authors. While both Dutch and Flemish TV often use subtitles for Flemish people, writers can get away with a lot more. "Dimitri Verhulst is a good example," she explains. "He has his own very Flemish idiom, but that's accepted in the Netherlands, where he has even won literary prizes." Tom Lanoye and Hugo Claus are other examples.

So is the purpose of her first novel, which she will discuss this month at the Antwerp book festival *Het andere boek* (see page 9), to escape the limits of translation and take advantage of this freedom that writers enjoy? "I've been writing since I was little," she says. "It's something I've always wanted to do".

Puinvrouw in Berlijn (Rubble Woman in Berlin) is the story of a Flemish journalist living in Berlin, who falls in love with the mysterious Gregor. He shows her the many sides of the city. "Berlin is a character in the story," she says. "I went there first as a student, and go back regularly. I wanted to show the different facets of the city, as a metaphor for the different facets of the characters. Free will is a theme of the book, and so is language. The two main characters have to try to find a common language in which they can speak to each other."

Free will figures heavily in Keteleer's other position: chair of the Writers in Prison committee of Flemish PEN. It's the local branch of International PEN, the world's oldest human rights organisation. It works for writers everywhere, protecting freedom of expression and defending



© Norbert Maes

those who are harassed, imprisoned and sometimes killed for their essays, articles or prose.

The committee organises actions on behalf of writers in prison worldwide: writing letters to the writers themselves, and writing to the authorities of the countries concerned. In both cases, the important message is that the world is watching and waiting. One writer imprisoned in Mali, for example, was not being allowed any mail, until he finally received a postcard with just the message "*Groetjes van Amsterdam*" (Greetings from Amsterdam). That was enough, he later said, for him to realise there were people out there supporting him.

"It can be a bit frustrating because you don't always know what the effect is," Keteleer says. "But we get reports that the writers concerned receive better treatment in prison because of the international attention. That's something."

PEN has published a list of cases since about 2004, which includes a fair amount of good news. But it also includes a number of cases of threats to freedom of speech in Europe.

As might be expected, the document is full of cases from Turkey, China, countries of the former Soviet Union, Central Asian republics and South America. But there are also cases from Spain, Hungary, Italy and France. In the latter case, the publishing director of *Lyon Magazine*, Philippe Brunet-Lecomte, was indicted on charges of "defending a criminal act" after publishing an interview with an imam who advocated the stoning of women for adultery.

"Freedom of speech can always be threatened, even here," says Keteleer. "Recently at a meeting of the Human Rights Council [of the United Nations] in Geneva there was discussion about making insults to religion an exception to the right to free speech." A great many writers are already being victimised for insults to religion, among them Jerzy Urban, fined in Poland in 2005 for insulting the Pope.

There'll be an opportunity to find out more on 15 November, which is the International Day of the Imprisoned Writer. Flemish PEN will be running a programme of events in cooperation with Bozar. Keteleer, meanwhile, is busy on a collection of short stories and her third volume of poetry.

→ <http://users.telenet.be/hildeketeleer>



© Shutterstock

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



oog →

The ophthalmologist described my complaint as a case of "recurrent erosion". Knowing there was a name for my stupidity was comforting. He said that mostly it was caused by people sticking combs in their oog – eye, or in my case a cocktail stick.

It would clear up with months of ointment, which was a relief. But it did shake me up a bit to think that I had nearly poked out one of my ogen – eyes. Imagine going blind, imagine being blind.

Severine D'Hondt is blind and works as a part-time receptionist at a hotel in the middle of Brussels. She lives in Antwerp and travels three days a week to the capital by train. In the stations, they know her: "*Ik val natuurlijk op, als blinde met een hond* – I stand out, of course, as a blind person with a dog."

How Severine got her job is worth telling. Her brother works in the hotel branch, so she phoned the HR manager and told him that she was planning to send him *een sollicitatie* – an application for a job as a receptionist. She told him she was blind and asked if *ze haar kandidatuur persoonlijk mocht komen toelichten* – she could come personally to explain her candidacy. Clearly, she's not backward about going forward. She was offered the job there and then, but first she wanted to check that her Windows-

Eyes software worked on the hotel computers, which it did.

She does what any receptionist does: *inchecken* – checking in, *uitchecken* – checking out, *telefoontjes doorverbinden* – putting phone calls through. Sometimes when she asks how a guest spells their name, the guest will say: "*Het staat hier toch* – But it's here." She then says simply: "*Ik kan niet lezen, ik ben blind* – I can't read, I'm blind."

Very occasionally, Severine doesn't hear when there's someone in front of her. She used to apologise by saying: "*Sorry, ik hebt u niet gezien* – Sorry, I didn't see you." Now she simply says "*Ik ben blind*."

You're probably thinking that the poor girl does pretty well but three days is all she can take. Well, Severine has another life, that of a singer and uses the name Severine Doré. She sang in the selection for the Eurovision Song Festival in 2002. Now she has a career singing at receptions and company dinners. "*Ik hou van mensen* – I love people."

So if you are in Noordstation late in the evening and you see a woman with her guide dog, help her by shouting out the platform number of the next train to Antwerp. By the way, her dog is called Branco.

→ www.severinedore.be

The last word →→→

Fighting back

"One girl who had obviously picked up the term from her parents once called me a 'dirty Turk'. It happened once, and her friends turned against her. Later she came to apologise." Flemish-Turkish singer Hadise, who last week launched a new campaign against bullying at school

Talking tetanus

"I don't want to talk about tennis, I want to talk about tetanus, which kills newborns worldwide. That's more important than speculation about my comeback." Tennis star and Unicef ambassador Justine Henin, in an interview on VRT

Bad sports

"Too many football clubs are in the hands of fathers and grandfathers who were sporting failures themselves. They project their ambitions onto young players and forget that they're dealing with children." André Van Lierde of sports organisation Bloso, which found that clubs are increasingly rejecting children who are "not good enough"

Sounding off

"Whoopee? It's just a cry, because her trainer hammered it into her that she needed to breathe out sharply when she hit the ball." Mark Wickmayer, father of Yanina, on his daughter's distinctive war-cry